

W. P. & Z. COATES

6 CENTURIES OF Russo/ Polish Relations

The well-known authors of
A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations
have written with customary care
& incontrovertible documentation
a history of the relations between
Poland & Russia which provides

a key to the understanding of a problem which has perplexed European statesmen for generations. At the same time they have given what amounts to a short history of the main features in Russia's historical development.

SIX CENTURIES
of
RUSSO-POLISH RELATIONS

By
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PREFACE

THE SLAV PEOPLES from every point of view are second to none on the planet.

Unfortunately, for six centuries the Eastern Slavs—Great Russians, Ukrainians and Byelorussians on the one hand—and the Poles, one of the branches of the Western Slavs, on the other—were engaged in a bitter fratricidal struggle interrupted by periods of peace, some of short, others of long, duration, which were only at best prolonged armistices.

These devastating wars brought advantages to the common enemies of the Slavs, but only death and ruin to the Slavs themselves, Eastern and Western.

This disastrous policy began in 1349 when the Russian State was engaged in a life and death struggle with the Tatars. In that year Polish Forces annexed Eastern Galicia or as the Poles called it "Red Russia." That was a fatal mistake for Poland; it brought her no permanent gains although Eastern Galicia did remain in her hands till the third Partition in 1795. It earned for her the stern hatred of the Eastern Slavs, and constituted an important factor in the formation of the Russian policy which led to Poland's extinction as a nation a little over four centuries later.

The annexation of Eastern Galicia was only the beginning of Poland's, and later joint Poland-Lithuania's, aggression eastwards. Polish aggression against Russia reached the pinnacle of its extension when in 1610 (by this date Poland and Lithuania had been welded into a single State) Polish troops entered Moscow, only to be driven out two years later.

It may seem incomprehensible to-day that Polish and Lithuanian forces combined could ever have occupied Moscow, but at that time the Russian State was passing through a period of intensive convulsions, "The Times of Trouble." Amongst other factors leading to disorganization and weakness was the circumstance that one dynasty had come to an end in Russia and the other had not yet been established. In addition at that period the joint population of Poland-Lithuania was about equal to that of Russia.

The liberation of Moscow in 1612 meant that the tide had now turned in Russia's favour and it began on balance to ebb rapidly against Poland. In 1667, i.e. fifty-five years later, the famous Truce

*

of Andrusovo was signed. Regarding this instrument the Polish historian Roman Dyboski wrote:

This year marks a turning-point in Poland's relations with her powerful enemy in the East . . . Poland is driven back on her line of defence, the broad River Dnieper, and even that line is ominously crossed by Russia. The town of Kiev, situated on its western bank, the metropolis of Poland's Ukrainian dominions, is lost to Poland. Polish expansion eastward ceased, and Russian expansion westward begins. . . .¹

True, that frontier remained unchanged for a century, but then followed the three Partitions—1772, 1793, 1795—in quick succession, under which Russia took back all her lost territory, except Eastern Galicia, which went to Austria.

Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, D.D. (at one time Dean of Westminster and Professor of Ecclesiastical History), writing from an ecclesiastical point of view in 1857, thus commented on the invasion and expulsion of the Mongols and Poles from Russian territory:

The invasion and expulsion of the Mongols form the first crisis of Russian history; the invasion and expulsion of the Poles form the second. We are so much accustomed to regard the Russians as the oppressors of the Poles, that we find it difficult to conceive a time when the Poles were the oppressors of the Russians. Our minds are so preoccupied with the Russian partition of Poland, that we almost refuse to believe in the fact that there was once a Polish partition of Russia. Yet so it was, and neither the civil nor the ecclesiastical history of Russia can be understood without bearing in mind that long family quarrel between the two great Slavonic nations, to us so obscure, to them so ingrained, so inveterate, so intelligible.²

Comparing Russia's struggle against Poland with England's against Spain, the Professor continued:

Its political effects may be here dismissed. But its ecclesiastical effect was hardly less important than that produced by the wars with the Tatars. As the vehement anti-Mussulman spirit of the nation was quickened by the one, so the vehement anti-Popish spirit received a strong impulse from the other. Poland was to Russia the chief representative of the Latin Church; Papal supremacy was in the national mind identified with the Polish conquest; and the war between the two nations became identified with a war between the two Churches. The nations have now changed places in their relative importance, but not more so than Spain and England since the days when our own terror and hatred of Popery were inspired by the Spanish Armada. As the deliverance from the Spanish Armada to the Church and State of England, so was the deliverance from the Polish yoke to the Church and State of Russia.

¹ *Outlines of Polish History*, by Roman Dyboski, pp. 109-10.

² *Lectures on the History of the Eastern Church* (1908 edition), p. 327.

Regarding the times of trouble, the Professor said: "It was the early part of the seventeenth century that witnessed the crisis of the struggle. The dynasty of Ruric came to an end in the death or the murder of the child Demetrius, last of the race. Pretender after Pretender, false Demetrius succeeding to false Demetrius, occupied the Imperial throne, and the Polish Sigismund seized the opportunity of supporting the armies of the imposter. Moscow was in their hands, the Latin services were chanted in the Kremlin, organs were heard in the Patriarchal church, anarchy spread through the country."

As just mentioned, all of Russia's "Lost Western Lands" were returned to her under the Partitions, except Eastern Galicia. This exception rankled in the Russian mind. Platonov records that it was a big disappointment to Catherine the Great, and during the first World War the Allied Governments agreed that at the conclusion of hostilities "the one jewel missing from the Imperial Crown" should be returned to Russia.

Almost throughout their history the Poles, that is of course the governing classes of Poland—the nobility and the rich landowners—have shown remarkable ineptitude in their conduct both of home and foreign affairs. Engels' strictures, made in a letter dated May 23, 1851, if applied—as of course he definitely did apply it—to the Polish governing class, are as all Polish history up to 1945 shows, fully deserved. Engels says:

The Poles have never done anything in history except play at brave, quarrelsome stupidity. And one cannot point to a single instance in which Poland represented progress successfully, even if only in relation to Russia, or did anything at all of historic importance.

Russia, on the other hand, is really progressive in relation to the East. For all its baseness and Slavonic dirt, Russian domination is a civilizing element on the Black Sea, the Caspian Sea and Central Asia and among the Bashkirs and Tatars, and Russia has absorbed far more civilizing and especially industrial elements than the Poles, whose whole nature is that of the idle cavalier.¹

As for absorbing foreign elements, Engels declares:

Poland has never been able to nationalize foreign elements. The Germans in the towns are and remain Germans. Every German-Russian of the second generation is a speaking example of Russia's faculty for Russianizing Germans and Jews. Even the Jews develop Slavonic cheek-bones there.

Napoleon's wars of 1807 and 1812 afford striking examples of the "immortality" of Poland. The only immortal thing about Poland was its habit

¹ Marx and Engels. *Selected Correspondence*, p. 37.

of picking baseless quarrels. Added to which the largest section of Poland, the so-called White Russia, i.e. Byelostok, Grodno, Vilna, Smolensk, Minsk, Mogilev, Volhynia and Podolia, have with a few exceptions quietly allowed themselves to be governed by the Russians since 1772; except for a few burghers and noblemen here and there they have never stirred. A quarter of Poland speaks Lithuanian, a quarter Ruthenian and a small section semi-Russian, while of the Polish section proper fully a third is Germanized.¹

Speaking of the possibilities of agrarian revolution Engels states:

I am certain that this revolution will come about completely in Russia before it does in Poland, owing to the national character and to Russia's more developed bourgeois elements. What are Warsaw and Cracow compared to Petersburg, Moscow, Odessa, etc.²

At the same time both Engels and Marx wrote about the Polish uprisings of 1830 and 1863 with appreciation and gave the latter every support they could. But these risings failed because the one factor which could have aroused the Polish masses to a really serious stern fight was absent, e.g. a solution of the Polish agrarian question, the proper satisfaction of the age-long land hunger of the Polish peasantry and the abolition of feudal relationships.

By the middle of 1863 (the insurrection had broken out in January), it was already clear that the Polish leaders had failed to rally the Polish masses and writing to Marx, June 11, 1863, Engels says:

The business in Poland no longer seems to be going so well of late. The movement in Lithuania and Little Russia is obviously weak, and the insurgents in Poland do not seem to be advancing either. All the leaders fall in the fighting or else are taken prisoner and shot, which seems to show that they must have to expose themselves greatly in order to get their people to advance. The quality of the insurgents is no longer what it was in March and April, the best fellows have been used up.³

But Engels always was an optimist and he continues: "These Polacks are quite incalculable, however, and the business may still turn out well all the same, although the prospects are less." On the other hand he also saw the price of failure: "If they hold out they may yet be involved in a general European movement which will save them; on the other hand if things go badly Poland will be finished for ten years—an insurrection of this kind exhausts the fighting strength of the population for many years."⁴

¹ Marx and Engels. *Selected Correspondence*, pp. 37-8.

² *Ibid.*, p. 38. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 149. ⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 149-50.

Actually this 1863 insurrection was the last of its kind in Poland.

Poland was powerless in its struggle against Russia—and only gained her independence after the Russian November 1917 revolution.

The first World War brought freedom and independence to Poland, thanks to the Russian revolution and the defeat of Austria and Germany. The Soviet Government willingly agreed to the re-establishment of the Polish State within her ethnographical frontiers, which as far as Soviet Russia was concerned meant that Poland's eastern frontier should be "the Curzon Line," her original frontier. Had that just demarcation line been accepted, the history of Soviet-Polish relations between 1919 and 1939 might have been very different, the history of Europe might have been very different, in fact the second World War might never have occurred. Unfortunately, in 1920 Pilsudski, encouraged no doubt by evil counsellors in the Chancelleries of London and Paris, repeated the same tragic crime made by the Polish leaders six centuries earlier. Taking advantage of Soviet Russia's preoccupation with other enemies, Polish forces invaded Russia and annexed—under the Treaty of Riga—Ukrainian and Byelorussian territory.

To say that this was a mad act would be an understatement. Pilsudski and colleagues must have known that no great State would tolerate this brutal injustice for long, and Lloyd George and others warned the Polish leaders, but in vain.

The Polish governing class was equally supine in their home policy and Poland fell to the German onslaught in 1939 within a few weeks. Marx was a thousand times right, when in connection with the break-up of Poland in 1795, he declared that "only a democratic Poland could maintain her independence," but that democracy in Poland was impossible without the abolition of all feudal rights.

But the fact that the Polish people, like the peoples of other countries, are capable of building a true democratic system once the power of the big landowners and rich merchant and manufacturing classes have been broken, the land given back to the people and the creative forces of the people set free, is shown by the great economic and cultural progress made in Poland ever since the present Polish Government has come into power.

In regard to foreign relations, they have broken completely with the disastrous policy which began in 1349. In a Soviet-Polish Treaty of July 5, 1945, the Polish Government freely accepted the historic and ethnographical frontier of Poland which conforms in the main

to the "Curzon Line." The Soviet and Polish official comments quoted later in this book on the occasion of the signature of that instrument, show that both sides recognized its tremendous historic importance.

As for home policy, one of the first acts of the Government was to break the power of the big landed estate owners, thus providing the first requisite for the establishment of real democracy.

We have no need here to recount the achievements of the Polish Government to date, but it cannot be too strongly emphasized that one of its greatest merits is that for the first time in Polish history a Polish Government rests on the willing and enthusiastic support of the common people of Poland—the workers and peasants. A vivid illustration of this is furnished by the fact that the Polish Trade Union Congress, November 1945, was attended by the President of the National Council of Poland, M. Bierut, Premier M. Osobka-Morawski, Marshal Rola-Zymierski, Ministers Matuszewski and Jedrichowski.

Marshal Rola-Zymierski, addressing the Conference, said:

This is the first time in the history of Poland that the Commander of the Polish Armed Forces speaks at a trade-union congress and conveys greetings on behalf of the Polish Army. As a result of the joint struggle of the Polish Army and the Polish working class, we have liberated the people of Poland. There is no doubt that the workers will also play a great part in the consolidation of peace. The Polish Army is the guard of strong, independent, democratic Poland, and it will continue to stand on guard for the interests of labour and democracy.

The Premier, M. Osobka-Morawski, greeting the Congress on behalf of the Government, gave an account of what had been achieved since the establishment of the new independent Poland and stressed in particular the great role of the Trade Union movement in Poland.

The President of the National Council of Poland, M. Bierut, struck a similar note when he declared:

We attach especial significance to our Congress not only because the Polish Trade Unions have more than one million members,¹ but also because it bears witness to the great part the working people play in building up the new democratic State.

There can be little doubt that a Polish Government whose power rests on the people and which considers the interests of the latter

¹ In September 1947, the membership of the Polish Trade Unions was over two and a half million.

paramount, a Government which knows how to interest the masses of workers and peasants in the economic and cultural development of the country, will not repeat the mistakes still less the crimes of the old Polish pans, but will maintain the independence of the country, promote the welfare of its people and lead it from strength to strength.

The new Poland has turned her back on the policy which led to six centuries of Russo-Polish wars and bitterness. And now that neither Russia nor Poland are imperialist powers it has proved possible to lay the foundations of enduring peace between Poland and the U.S.S.R., to the immense benefit of both States and to the world at large.

We take this opportunity of expressing our thanks to Mr. Andrew Rothstein for reading the manuscript and for some very valuable suggestions.

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Chapter I

KIEV-RUSSIA AND THE POLISH STATE

THIS BOOK is a History of Russo-Polish Relations, not a History of Soviet-Polish Relations, because it deals with Russo-Polish relations stretching back for over six centuries. These facts are not popularly known in this country.

Within the limited compass of this book, we can only deal with the salient facts of the history of the relations between the two countries. At the same time we have endeavoured to give a brief general outline of the rise and development of the Russian State, particularly in so far as it relates to Russo-Polish affairs.

In an investigation of this kind it is always advisable to begin at the beginning.

From time immemorial, and certainly before the seventh century, the eastern Slavonic tribes occupied the immense territory in eastern Europe stretching from the southern shores of the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea.

The history of the U.S.S.R. published under the auspices of the Historical Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. (in subsequent pages we shall refer to this important work as the *History of the U.S.S.R.*) draws attention to the fact that the Slavs as a distinct people were mentioned by Roman writers (Pliny, Tacitus) in the first and second centuries under the name of Venedi. They were referred to as a numerous people occupying a huge area to the east of the Vistula and in the other direction from the Danube to the far north.

The Slavs, particularly the Antes (later identified by archaeological research as the Eastern Slavs) were singled out by ancient historians as a great and brave people. In the sixth and seventh centuries the domain of the Antes reached the Black Sea in the south (from the mouth of the Danube to the mouth of the Dnieper and the Taman Peninsula), in the west to the lower reaches of the Danube and in the east to the Northern Donetz.

The noted Russian historian Platonov wrote:

Of all the Russian Slavs the Croats and Volynians (Duliebs and Buzhans) remained near the Carpathian Mountains. The Poliane, Drevliane, and the Dregovichs established themselves on the right bank of the Dnieper and its tributaries. The Severiane, Radimichi, and Viatichi crossed the Dnieper and

took up their abodes on the left bank tributaries of that river, the Viatichi pressing forward even to the Oka River. The Krivichi also left the Dnieper Region for more northerly latitudes, settling along the headwaters of the Volga and Western Dvina, while a branch of the same tribe, the Slovenes, settled around Lake Ilmen.¹

These tribes were at first independent (just as the tribes in western European territories were before the western European States took national form) but by the ninth century they had gradually coalesced into a number of Principalities with Kiev as the most powerful. We shall return to this subject on a later page. In the meantime we would stress that the regions mentioned in the extract from Platonov and which we would repeat were inhabited by Russian or Eastern Slavs from the dawn of Russian history, included among others those regions now known as Western Byelorussia, Western Ukraine and Eastern Galicia.

Poland as a State made her appearance on the world stage about a century later than Russia. Roman Dyboski in his *Outlines of Polish History*² wrote:

Slavonic nations play a distinct part in Europe as early as the seventh century of our era, but it is not till the tenth that a Polish State emerges into the light of history. It appears at a time when two neighbouring Slavonic States are also consolidating for good; a Russian one, which in that period centres in the south, round the town of Kiev; and a Czech one, which inherits part of a large and short-lived Moravian Empire of the ninth century.³

As to the geographical situation and limits of Poland in these early days, Dyboski is explicit. After referring to the mist of legends in which the early history of Poland is shrouded, he continued:

All these legends centre round two rivers: the Vistula, which is the principal artery of central Poland throughout history, and its western tributary the Warta, which waters the old western province of Poland, that was to hold its own against Prussian rule so bravely in our own days. It is these regions then, on the banks of the Vistula and the Warta, which form the nucleus of the oldest historical Poland, and they are the principal possessions of the earliest authentically recorded ruler, Miesco I (962-92). His empire grew to considerable size, extending as far as the mouth of the River Oder in the north-west; but he had still to do homage to the German Emperor, and was not well able

¹ *History of Russia*, p. 8.

² *Outlines of Polish History*: a course of lectures delivered at King's College, University of London.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

to hold his own against aggressive Slavonic neighbours, either the Czechs on the one hand or the Russians on the other.¹

And the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, on the subject of the origin of the Polish nation, states:

We possess no certain historical data relating to Poland till the end of the tenth century. It would seem, from a somewhat obscure passage in the chronicle compiled from older sources by Nestor, a monk of Kiev (d.c. 1115), that the progenitors of the Poles, originally established on the Danube, were driven from thence by the Romans to the still wider wilderness of central Europe, settling finally among the virgin forests and impenetrable morasses of the basin of the upper waters of the Oder and the Vistula. Here the Lechici, as they called themselves (a name derived from the mythical patriarch Lech), seemed to have lived for centuries, in loosely connected communities, the simple lives of hunters, herdsman and tillers of the soil, till the pressure of rapacious neighbours compelled them to combine for mutual defence.²

There is no contradiction between the Polish historian and the *Encyclopædia Britannica* as to the geographical situation of the original homelands of the Poles, because the River Warta lies between the Oder on the west and the Vistula on the east. The Warta is a tributary of the Oder. We would underline the words on the banks of the Vistula, the Warta and the Oder, because they are of crucial importance for the purpose of this study. The banks of these rivers constitute the historic homelands of the Polish nation.³

The history of Lithuania, as will appear in later pages, was for centuries closely intertwined with that of Poland, and for this reason we must deal briefly with it here. The original homelands of the Lithuanian tribes were in the dense forests lying along the basins of the Niemen and the Western Dvina, being situated, broadly speaking, in the territories known in our time as Latvia and Lithuania.

In *Nations of To-day*, edited by John Buchan, the author states:

From time immemorial they [the Lithuanians] have inhabited their forest-clad plain. . . . They had no contact with the outer world, save by the waterway which led from Scandinavia to Byzantium along the Dvina, not far from their borders, and the trade-route from Prussia to Italy which passed by Caruntum near Vienna.⁴

However, they were not to be left in peace. Their territory was invaded, among others, by the Teutonic Knights in 1230. The Knights subdued and enslaved the natives and settled in the territory now known as Latvia, but Lithuania as a whole remained unsubdued.

¹ *Outlines of Polish History*, pp. 16-17.

² p. 902.

³ See coloured maps I and II.

⁴ p. 138.

To quote again from *Nations of To-day*:

The Lithuanians proper, that is the Augstaitians, Jotvingians, Dakians, Samogitians and Sudavians, saw the fate of their neighbours and realised the necessity of consolidating their forces in order to maintain their independence. The various communes under their priests and officers began to co-operate, and the organisation of the State gradually came to conform more and more to the military exigencies of self-defence, until in 1248 complete unity was achieved under Mindaugas. . . .

The Lithuanians were now compact and strong in a military sense.¹

The date 1248 is very important, as will be shown in later pages, because eight years earlier the Mongol or Tatar invasion of Kiev-Russia had begun.

Now to turn again to Kiev-Russia. In the ninth century the Varangians invaded eastern Europe and succeeded in conquering considerable territory inhabited by the Russian (or Eastern) Slavs. The cultural level of the Varangians was not above that of the Slavs, and by partly exterminating and partly uniting with the native princes and nobility, the Varangians rapidly became Slavianized. Legend has it that the Varangian Rurik became ruler of Novgorod in 862 by invitation of the native Slavs. His successor, Oleg, extended his domain by a descent along the Dnieper and captured Smolensk and Liubech and finally also Kiev in about 882. He took the title of "Grand Prince of Kiev." Kiev then became "the mother of all Russian cities" and the centre of Kiev-Russia (the then Russian State).

Prince Oleg (about 879-922, the exact dates are not known), was a powerful and purposeful ruler. Under his direction Kiev became a rich and important trading centre. He was a great soldier. He besieged Constantinople in 907, defeated the Greeks and made them buy off the Russian prince. He built cities to protect the Russian State against the Asiatic invaders, such as the Khazars and the Pechenigs. He united the country and strengthened its protection by treaties with Byzantium. In brief, he established Russian-Slav independence and power on a strong foundation. Gradually he subjugated the neighbouring Slav tribes, Drevliani, Severiani and Radivichei.

The *History of the U.S.S.R.* mentioned above declares: "In the year of the death of Oleg, the Kiev State already covered considerable territory. The territories subject to Kiev, including Novgorod, were compelled to recognize the authority of the Kiev prince, i.e. to pay tribute and to help him with men in his military campaigns. On the

¹ p. 139.

east the sovereignty of Kiev-Russia extended to the Mieri Region where the town of Rostov had been constructed much earlier evidently by the Krivichi (one of the Russian Slav tribes). In the extreme south it was still struggling with the Tiverts and Ulich tribes" (along the coast of the Black Sea).

Under Oleg's successors the Slav tribes between the Dniester and Danube were also subjugated and included in Kiev-Russia.

For centuries the steppes close to the Black Sea coast had been the battlegrounds for invading Asiatic tribes. These tribes settled on the steppes near the sea coast, where the country was suitable for nomadic life. They shunned the forests of central and northern Russia, which gave the Russian Slavs comparative protection. In these early days, despite the presence of the nomadic, pillaging tribes near the sea coast, considerable trade was done by both northern Europe and Kiev-Russia, via the Russian waterways, with Constantinople the capital of Byzantium. The traffic passed from Sweden across the Baltic and the Gulf of Finland via Lakes Ladoga and Ilmen, along the Rivers Lovat and Dnieper to the Black Sea and thence along the western shores of the latter to Constantinople.

"The routes ordinarily followed," wrote H. P. Vowles in his *Ukraine and Its People*, "were along the West Dvina from the Baltic and down the Dnieper, or alternatively from the Gulf of Finland by way of the Neva to Lake Ladoga, thence up the Volkhov to Lake Ilmen and on to the source of the Lovat across the Dvina, and so down the Dnieper to the Black Sea."¹

From Kiev to Constantinople the merchandise was conveyed in flotillas of boats protected by armed guardsmen.²

After the death of Oleg, Kiev-Russia was ruled first by his son Igor and afterwards by Igor's widow, and the latter was succeeded by their son Prince Sviatoslav, who died in 973. The grandson of Oleg was another warrior prince. He continued the work of his grandfather. He defeated the Greeks, the Bulgarians on the Danube and the Khazars, one of the numerous powerful Asiatic tribes which invaded Russia.

All his campaigns were directed to further strengthening the Russian State and expanding and protecting its trade and trade routes, not only along the Dnieper and on the Black Sea, but also further east. He conducted campaigns along the Oka and Volga and in the

¹ p. 20.

² The route was approximately the same as that taken by the Varangians shown on coloured map I.

northern Caucasus, where he subjugated the Osetins and Cherkessy. Kiev, though on the verge of the steppe and therefore open to attacks from the warlike and plundering nomadic tribes, was effectively protected. It continued to grow in strength, extent and influence. As the centre of the trade routes it also continued to expand as a great commercial city, and other towns along the waterways—Novgorod, Pskov, Smolensk, etc.—were dependent on Kiev.

Kiev-Russia was now the principal Black Sea power, reaching her peak under Sviatoslav and his son Vladimir (978-1015), who succeeded as Grand Prince and sole ruler after a stormy interval of sanguinary fighting with his brothers. Vladimir, amongst his other campaigns, also marched on Poland in 981 and succeeded in detaching the Cherven towns, the inhabitants of which were mainly Russian.

Vladimir was not content with simply extending the domain of Kiev-Russia, the economic development of which had reached a point when a much greater degree of homogeneity and political and cultural unity of the different parts of the State was essential.

To encourage the establishment of a unified State he at first endeavoured to establish a unified religion throughout his domains by the co-ordination of the then existing tribal religions, but this met with little real success. Finally he was induced in 988-9 to accept Christianity (which had been slowly penetrating into Russia since the ninth century) as the official religion of Kiev-Russia.

With reference to the official adoption of Christianity the *History of the U.S.S.R.* very rightly points out the following as among the important results which gradually followed this step: (1) it brought Kiev-Russia into closer contact with the western European States; (2) it strengthened the position of the governing classes of Kiev-Russia; (3) it greatly raised the power of the Grand Prince of Kiev and consolidated the connections between the different parts of the State; (4) it helped to raise the cultural level of Kiev-Russia. Writing and literature became more widespread, and amongst other things schools for the children of the Kiev nobility were established. Finally the political and cultural relations between Kiev-Russia and Byzantium, from which the former received its religion, were very much strengthened.

Regarding the adoption of Christianity by Vladimir, Platonov relates:

Returning to Kiev with his wife and Greek clergy, Vladimir set out to convert all his subjects to the new faith. The idols were cast down and flung into the river, and churches were erected where they had stood. The

traditional account says that the new religion spread peaceably, except in a few places. In Novgorod, for instance, the use of force was necessary. In the more remote parts of the country paganism persisted for some centuries, and some of its ideas became interwoven with the new doctrine.¹

Here we may record that Poland (and later Lithuania) received their Christianity from Rome, a fact that did much to sow and spread discord between the two Slav peoples during the succeeding thousand years, and also explains why the Vatican has been anti-Russian and pro-Polish for ten centuries.

Vladimir's death was followed by a bitter quarrel between his sons. One of them, Sviatopolk, received help from Boleslav the Brave, King of Poland (992-1025), but he was finally defeated by Yaroslav, who later earned the title of "The Wise," and the latter became Grand Prince of Kiev (1019-54).

Yaroslav was a competent and vigorous ruler. He inflicted a crushing defeat on the Pechenigs and other Asiatic tribes inhabiting the Black Sea steppes who had been raiding and pillaging Russia for many years, and drove them from Kiev-Russia once and for all. Some trekked to the Balkan Peninsula and settled there, others remained in Russia and were finally assimilated by the Russian Slavs. He extended the trade and connections of Kiev until it became a great emporium. In 1043 he began a three years' campaign against Byzantium, but this ended in failure. It was the last Russian campaign against that ancient and famous empire.

Yaroslav was a far-seeing ruler who realized that Russia had much to learn from the more developed countries, and he established many and durable contacts with southern and western Europe and with the object of strengthening these contacts he arranged inter-marriages with the other royal families of Europe. Among these may be mentioned the marriage of his daughter Anna to King Henry I of France; another daughter Elizabeth married King Harald Haarderaade of Norway. His grandson Vladimir Monomakh married an English princess. Under Yaroslav's wise and strong authority, Kiev-Russia became one of the great European Powers of that period.

But although at the beginning of the eleventh century Kiev was for that time a very rich city competing with Constantinople, and Kiev-Russia had expanded into a powerful State and was conducting a lively trade with western Europe and had fairly close relations with

¹ *History of Russia*, p. 36.

the latter and also the east, the germs of decay within it were already apparent at the end of Vladimir's reign.

Kiev-Russia, which consisted of the various Principalities united for the most part by force of arms, was peopled in the main by Eastern—i.e. Russian—Slavs, but was by no means completely homogeneous either ethnographically, economically or culturally and as the great towns developed and increased in importance, so there started a tendency for the Principalities of which the towns were the chief centres to endeavour to break away from Kiev. Already early in the eleventh century Novgorod had refused to pay further tribute to Kiev. Later Sviatoslav Yaroslavich (1073–6) succeeded in reconsolidating the Kiev State, but the tendency towards dissolution thus begun continued, and in the second half of the eleventh century the political decline of Kiev was quite evident. Each Principality constantly tried to establish its own political independence with its own Grand Prince, and wars constantly raged between them.

After Yaroslav's death (1054) his sons and grandsons quarrelled violently about the succession to the throne of the Grand Prince of Kiev, and this only accentuated the centrifugal tendencies which had started earlier. The Kiev Principality broke up into a number of independent provinces, each with its own prince united only by a common religion and family ties. This was the state of affairs when about 1064 another nomad Asiatic invading tribe, the Polovtsy, appeared on the frontiers of the Principality and plundered the country.

The Polovtsy dealt a resounding defeat on Kiev-Russia in 1068 and in the same year the common people of Kiev rose in rebellion against their princes. Isyaslav, Grand Prince of Kiev (1054–73, with intervals during which he was forced to leave Kiev) fled to his nephew, the Polish Prince Boleslav the Brave. Helped by the Poles, Isyaslav returned to Kiev and cruelly suppressed the insurgents. Then followed a series of internicine struggles amongst the princes, some of whom even invited the Polovtsy to help them against the others.

The Central Government in Kiev found it more and more difficult to govern the various Principalities. Attempts were made to avoid the constant feudal wars of that time by calling conferences of the princes; the most noted of these was the general conference summoned in 1097 in Liubech. Here it was decided that Prince Sviatopolk (1093–1113) should be recognized as Grand Prince of Kiev, that each prince should keep his own patrimony and should abstain from attacking his neighbours. But this pact was not kept.

Sviatopolk, who was hated by the people for his cupidity and his protection of usurers, died in 1113: thereupon there were risings of the people, both in town and country; the houses of the usurers, as well as of the princes' hated officials, were stormed, whilst in the country the peasantry attacked the boyars, the monasteries and the family estates of the princes. Seized with fear, the propertied classes set aside the legal right of succession in favour of the prince of the neighbouring Principality of Pereiaslavl, Prince Vladimir Monomakh (1113-25), who by public choice became Grand Prince of Kiev. Vladimir Monomakh was a capable, energetic and popular Grand Prince who introduced a number of reforms, including the cutting down of the extent of usury. He kept the marauding Polovtsy firmly in check and for a time again restored the power of Kiev. Indeed, during his reign and up to 1132, Kiev was again the powerful centre of a big State.

Monomakh was succeeded by his eldest son, Prince Mastislav (1125-32), also a capable ruler, but soon after his death strife broke out among his brothers and the final decline of the Kiev Principality followed rapidly. Subsequently, when their sons and grandsons were not fighting among themselves, they were fighting with the sons and grandsons of Oleg Sviatoslavich, the Prince of Chernigov. This continued till the dawn of the thirteenth century.

In regard to the dissolution of the Kiev State, which was practically an accomplished fact by the middle of the twelfth century, the above-quoted *History of the U.S.S.R.* declares:

The Kiev State, like other barbarian States, was short-lived. The huge territory which was united under the power of Kiev, soon began to manifest a tendency to fall to pieces. This was in the first place the result of the growth of its constituent parts, each of which began to pursue its own policy, in its own sectional interests.

This, of course, meant amongst other things, as we have seen above, the refusal of the subordinate Principalities to pay tribute or taxes to Kiev. Thus, at the very time when the Kiev authority required ways and means of combating the separatist policies of its constituent parts, it was deprived of the material means to do so.

There were also important external reasons for the decline of Kiev-Russia. Thus the above-noted *History of the U.S.S.R.* says: "As a result of the crusades, the trade routes to western Europe from Byzantium and Asia Minor began to go direct across the Mediterranean Sea to

Genoa, Venice and the southern ports of France. The route along the Dnieper lost its importance and this in its turn caused an enormous decline of the Kiev trade."

With the loss of its importance as an emporium, Kiev also lost in prestige. So long as the Prince of Kiev was the acknowledged Grand Prince of the Russian State, the position was of great importance, but as that acknowledgment faded the position was not worth holding. When at the end of the twelfth century, Prince Andrew Bogoliubski got control of Kiev, he gave it to another prince, and himself remained at his own Principality of Rostov-Suzdal. Trade with the Black Sea and the Caspian was ruined and many of the inhabitants of the southern Principalities started on a long trek to the north, which finally led to the rise of Muscovy or Moscow-Russia.

This is also stressed by the Russian historian Platonov:

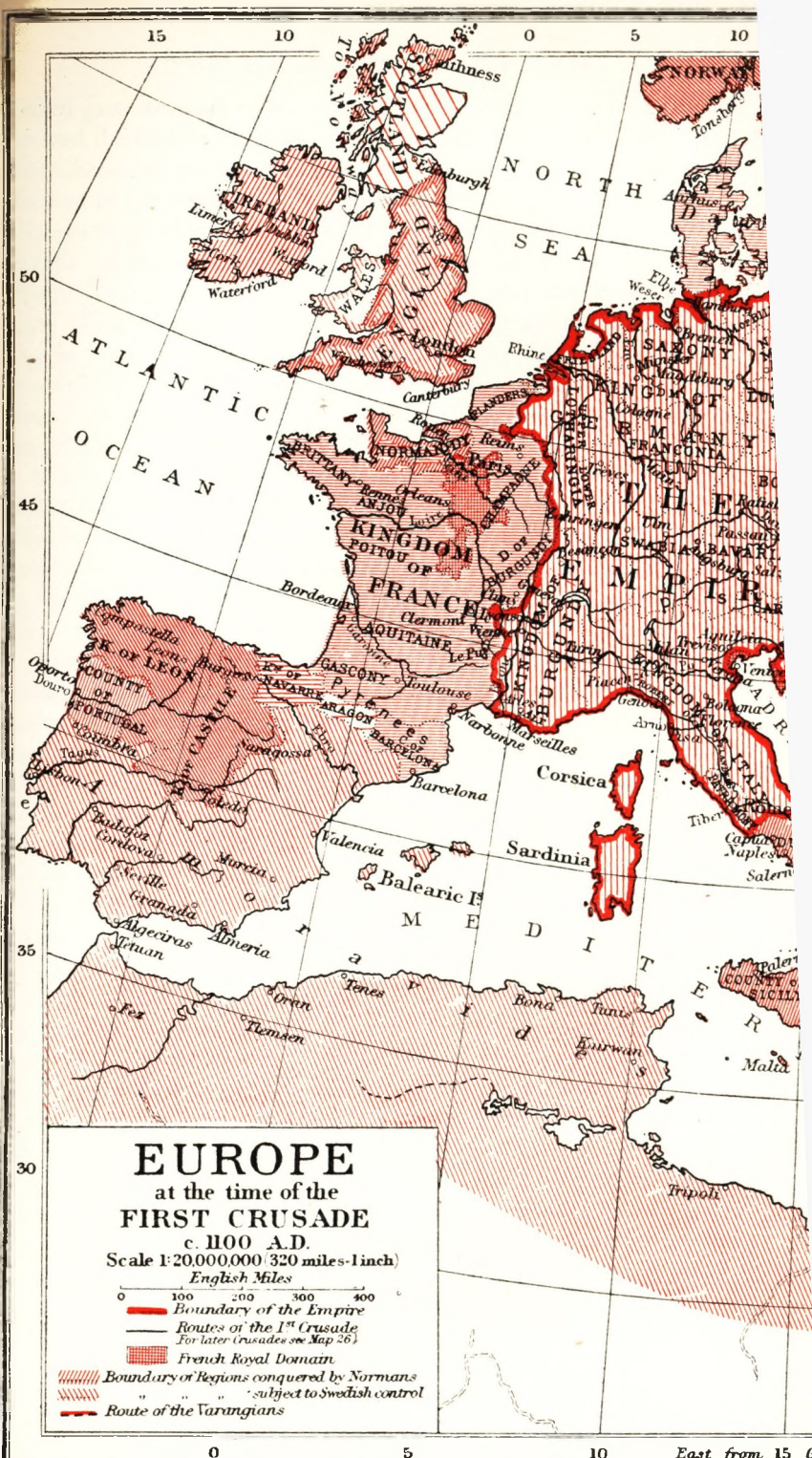
The Polovtsy continued their steady encroachments on Russian soil. By the second half of the twelfth century they had almost completely overrun and partly settled Pereiaslavl. They had gained control of all the highways of commerce, and trade with the Caspian Sea, the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea gradually declined and finally died out altogether. Kiev lost her importance as an intermediary between the trade of the west and the east. The inhabitants of the south Russian Principalities, deprived of security and employment owing to the ceaseless feuds and raids, abandoned their homes and moved northward and westward where they could have peace and security.¹

By the end of the twelfth century Kiev-Russia had been split up into the following well-defined Principalities with their own prince at their head: Turovo-Pinsk, Volhynia, Galicia, Polotsk, Novgorod, Smolensk, Chernigov, Syeversk, Muromo-Ryazan, Pereiaslavl and Rostov-Suzdal. These Principalities were in their turn divided into a number of smaller parts.

It is germane to our purpose to add here a few words about the formation of the Principalities, in particular the Galician-Volhynia Principality.

After the dissolution of the tribal forms of society among the Eastern Slavs inhabiting the territory along the Dniester, San, Bug and upper reaches of the Pripet Rivers, new political organizations were formed which centred around the big towns, the people and territory of which were named after them; thus the region around the town of Volhynia became known as Volhynia and the people as Volhynians. The region around Chervenka became known as the Chervensk towns. The town

¹ *History of Russia*, p. 53.



EUROPE

at the time of the
FIRST CRUSADE
c. 1100 A.D.

Scale 1:20,000,000 (320 miles=1 inch)

English Miles

0 100 200 300 400

- Boundary of the Empire
- Routes of the 1st Crusade
(For later Crusades see Map 26)
- French Royal Domain
- Boundary or Regions conquered by Normans
- " " " subject to Swedish control
- Route of the Varangians



I
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PHILIPS' HISTORICAL ATLAS
MEDIAEVAL AND MODERN

by
RAMSAY MUIR

Galich gave its name to the region Galich, which subsequently incorporated the Chervensk towns and formed the Principality of Galicia.¹ The Chervensk towns originally formed part of Poland, but towards the end of the tenth century the region was conquered by the Kiev Grand Prince Vladimir; later the Poles reconquered it, but about the middle of the eleventh century the Chervensk towns region was finally incorporated in Kiev-Russia by Yaroslav the Wise. At the close of the eleventh century, Galicia became a separate Principality, and in 1199 Prince Roman of Volhynia, the territory of which was peopled by Russian Slavs and had been subject to the Kiev princes from very early times, occupied Galicia and the two Principalities united into the Galicia-Volhynia Principality.

Galicia, together with the Chervensk towns which it had incorporated, occupied the extreme south-west corner of Russia and bordered directly on Poland and Hungary. On the west it embraced the north-eastern branch of the Carpathian mountains. In the south it extended to the Black Sea and the Danube and included the lower reaches of the Sereth, Pruth and Dniester.

Galicia had rich natural resources, a fertile soil and excellent river communications. Owing to its favourable geographical situation it early developed trade with western Europe via Poland and Hungary, as well as maintaining a lively trade with Byzantium. After the decline of Kiev, the Principality of Galicia-Volhynia was the most developed economically and culturally; nor did the decline of Kiev affect the development of Galicia, its old towns became progressively stronger, whilst new ones sprang up. Prince Roman (great-great-grandson of Vladimir Monomakh), as well as other Princes of Galicia, were constantly at war with Poland and other neighbouring States who coveted the rich and prosperous Principality.

Early in the thirteenth century, Hungary seized Galicia and by an agreement with Poland divided the Principality between Hungary and Poland. However, in 1221, the Hungarians were thrown out of Galicia, the Poles on their own were unable to maintain their hold, and in 1238, Roman's son Daniel became Prince of Galicia. He founded and settled in the town of Kholm.

Daniel, who was an extremely energetic and progressive prince, succeeded in conquering Kiev, placing his own representative there. During his time a number of new towns were built, trade, art and

¹ We use the name Galicia for this Principality as being better known, although this name only came into general use for this region much later.

culture were fostered, and in particular cultural ties with western Europe were strengthened. In the middle of the thirteenth century, Galicia-Volhynia was culturally at least the equal of any neighbouring western European country. Daniel died in 1264 and his son Lev transferred his capital to Lvov, which had been founded in 1254, and his uncle Prince Vasilko Romanovich became prince of the whole Galician-Volhynian Principality.

We have already pointed out that from the dawn of Russian history and before Poland had become a national State, the region now known as Western Byelorussia, Western Ukraine and Eastern Galicia, were peopled by Russian or Eastern Slavs. So also in the thirteenth century these regions formed part of the various Russian Principalities.

The three most important political centres which had grown in influence as Kiev declined were "Lord Novgorod the Great," Vladimir (Rostov-Suzdal region) and Galich (Galicia-Volhynian Principality). Just as these new States were consolidating in the early decades of the thirteenth century, a new, dark and stormy chapter in Russian history opened, which affected her development for centuries. We refer to the Tatar or Mongol invasion.

Chapter II

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE TATARS

AS MENTIONED AT THE END of the last chapter, we are now opening one of the darkest pages in Russian history. At the risk of undue repetition we would state once again that Kiev as a political and commercial centre had lost very considerably in importance, whilst three new centres were rising, Novgorod, the city of Galich on the banks of the Dniester and the city of Vladimir in the Rostov-Suzdal region.

The story which followed might have been very different had the Russian Slavs been united, because at this period, as in all later ones, they had lost none of their martial qualities. This was demonstrated by the crushing defeat which the famous Alexander Nevsky¹ inflicted on the Teutonic Knights of the Sword at Lake Chudsk in 1242. So crushing and decisive was this rout that the Teutons ceased being a serious menace to Russia. In passing it may be remarked that in this famous battle, fought over seven centuries ago, the Russian Slavs demonstrated their fighting superiority over the Germans.

It may be added here that two centuries later, in 1410, the final rout of the Teutonic Knights as a military force took place, when a combined army of Lithuanians, Russians and Poles defeated them overwhelmingly at Tannenberg (Grünwald). The battle of Tannenberg is usually regarded as a brilliant Polish victory over the Teutons, but it should be borne in mind that in this battle the Russian infantry (including Byelorussian, Smolensk, Polotsk and Kiev regiments) formed the backbone of the army which scored the great victory over the Teutonic Knights.

The Tatars had their first big victory in Russia on the River Kalke in 1223. Subsequently they marched across Siberia and the Urals, attacked and defeated the Bulgar settlements on the Volga and Kama and in 1237-8 they overran and devastated the territories of Ryazan, Kolomna, Moscow, Suzdal and Vladimir. In 1239, the Tatars renewed

¹ Alexander Yaroslavich was Prince of Novgorod. In 1240, the Swedes having invaded the Principality of Novgorod by way of Finland, reached the junction of the Neva with the Izhora. Here, however, they were met by Prince Alexander, who inflicted a crushing defeat on them. In commemoration of and gratitude for his bravery and generalship he was known henceforth as Alexander Nevsky (of the Neva).

their attack, and in 1240 they occupied Kiev in spite of the fierce resistance of its citizens. After the conquest of Kiev, the Tatars continued their successful march towards the west, occupying Volhynia and Galicia. As a result of the Tatar conquests in eastern Europe, a new powerful State was formed known as the "Golden Horde," and all the Russian Principalities became its vassals.

As to the character of the Tatar forces and the nature and effects of the Tatar conquest, Nicholas Makeev and Valentine O'Hara in their history *Russia* state:

The Tartar invasion was not a mere incursion of wild nomadic peoples. For centuries these tribes had been influenced by the civilization of China whence they borrowed not only their military and civil organization, but their elaborate bureaucratic methods of finance and assessment. Their army was the best equipped and disciplined and the most efficient of that time: They turned terror into a regular system which they made use of not only for military, but for administrative purposes. It was only by a system of ruthless repression and by the enforcement of slavery that they succeeded in completely disarming their enemies. They next proceeded to a regular census of the subject populations and to a methodical exaction of levies and contributions. Native princes were generally appointed tax gatherers. That the comparatively small numbers of these Tartar hordes were able for so many years to maintain their hold over Asia and eastern Europe is owing not only to the iron discipline of their armed forces with its strict and deadening formalism, but to the efficiency of their financial administration.¹

The Tatars were no mean foe, and despite the fact that Russia was overrun the struggle which she put up saved Europe from a similar invasion. These two historians declared:

The Mongolian hordes ravaged all Asia and eastern Europe, levelling towns, peoples and civilizations on their way. The west of Europe also would have shared the fate of the conquered had not these hordes exhausted their strength in the boundless steppes and plains of the east.²

It is true that in 1241 the Tatars also overran the whole of Poland and that they remained a menace to that country for the next five centuries, but as the two historians from whom we have just quoted state, the Tatars exhausted themselves in the main on the plains of Russia. In passing we may add that at the date of the Tatar invasion, the Polish Principalities were very much at loggerheads with one another. The Polish historian, Roman Dyboski, relates that "the Duke

¹ pp. 15-16.

² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

of Cracow (the titular ruler of Poland) ceased even formally to be the sovereign over the crowd of sectional rulers."¹

When the Tatars attacked from the east, the Swedes, Danes and Teutons attacked from the west. Sweden annexed Finland, Denmark annexed Estonia and the "Teutonic Knights" colonized the lands at the mouth of the Western Dvina and the Niemen. An additional few words regarding the "Knights" may be of assistance to the reader.

About the year 1159 some German merchants established themselves at the mouth of the Western Dvina. Together with the merchants, there also came representatives of the Catholic Church who endeavoured to convert the Livonians to Christianity.

Later, in the interests of the merchants of the northern German towns, Albert, who had been appointed Bishop of Livonia in 1200, induced Pope Innocent III to issue a Bull whereby merchants were forbidden, under pain of ex-communication, to enter the harbours of the Semigals (part of Kurland) and all trade had to pass through the mouth of the Western Dvina. In the year 1201, to strengthen their position, they founded the city of Riga.

However, all efforts to convert the Livonians to the Christian faith by crusades or special missions proved unavailing. No sooner did the armed missionaries leave than the Livonians reverted to their ancient faith and refused to pay church and other dues. Accordingly, in order to subdue the Livonians, Bishop Albert sought and obtained permission to form a special military monastic order. This was founded in 1202 and was known as the Sword Bearers or Knights of the Sword. It was a well-organized and well-armed force, and by 1208 succeeded in subduing the loosely bound, weakly armed Livonians. The latter, however, did not cease to struggle against the oppression of the "Sword Bearers" and against the religion imposed upon them.

The Knights of the Sword subsequently also played an important part in the subjection of Estonia.

Subsequently more Germans were invited by the Poles to occupy the territories between the Niemen and the Vistula, so as to act as a barrier between the warlike, then still heathen, Lithuanians and the Poles. The new arrivals, known as the "Teutonic Knights," also took possession of the territories between the two rivers in the years from 1225 to 1230. They came with the blessing of the Pope and the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. They were not only a combination of colonist-merchants, but they were also well organized

¹ *Outlines of Polish History*, p. 25.

militarily. Having established themselves on the shores of the Baltic and after the Tatars had seized north-eastern Russia, captured Kiev and devastated southern Russia, the Teutonic Knights—who in 1237 united with the Knights of the Sword—considered the time opportune to push into Russian territory and captured Dorpat and Pskov, largely as a result of treacherous boyars. However, as already mentioned, the Teutonic Knights were crushingly defeated by the Russians on the Chudsk Lake in 1242, and were driven out of Pskov and other Russian territory, but they continued to be a serious menace to the Lithuanians.

To sum up this part of our narrative, in the first half of the thirteenth century, the entire eastern seaboard of the Baltic was in non-Russian hands and practically all Russia was under the Tatar yoke. Later we shall explain how Lithuania and Poland took advantage of this situation to attack Russia from the west and annex Russian territory. Russia was overrun and compelled to pay tribute to the Tatars (the "Golden Horde") formed about 1243, but her spirit was unbroken and unconquered.

The Tatar yoke was certainly heavy and the tribute exacted from the Russians was severe, but the Tatars preferred to collect it through Russian princes, and so long as this tribute was regularly paid, they did not, after a time, interfere much with the life, customs and religion of the Russian people. However, they insisted on the regular payment of the tribute, punished non-payment severely and were ever on the watch to crush any attempt to break their yoke.

The main burden of the taxes, dues and oppression generally of the "Golden Horde" was, of course, borne by the labouring masses of the people who frequently revolted against their oppressors. In 1259 there was a rising in Novgorod and in 1262 in Rostov, Suzdal and Yaroslavl. The princes and boyars on the other hand, hoping to consolidate their privileges, for the most part helped the Tatars to suppress these revolts.

B. H. Sumner, in his *Survey of Russian History*, states: "Revolts or recalcitrance from the princes brought major raids far into Muscovy; at the least ten such during a hundred and fifty years (1259-1408) with the Tatars 'cutting down all the Christians like grass,' with some of the Russian princes aiding or abetting."¹

Kiev, as already mentioned, had declined, but a new Principality,

a new political-commercial centre, appeared on the Russian horizon, e.g. Moscow. Moscow, first a town, later a city and finally the capital of Russia was situated in the very extensive Principality of Suzdal. In the eleventh century Suzdal was sparsely populated, but a century later it had developed considerably. It was favoured by its geographical position, being less accessible to attacks than the Principality of Kiev, and as the latter declined in power, the Principality of Suzdal grew in strength. Moscow at that time was one of its several towns. Situated at the mouth of the Neglinka River where it falls into the Moskva River, Moscow (Moskva) is said to have been founded as a town in 1156, although earlier chronicles mention it as a village rather than a town in 1147. The latter is now taken as the date of foundation.

Russian princes, soon after the country began to recover from the shock of the Tatar invasion, planned and worked to break the foreign domination, but the first attempts ended in failure.

Later in this patriotic struggle Moscow played a prominent part. From about the middle of the thirteenth century the Principality of Moscow began its existence as a separate State and grew rapidly in strength and influence.

Among the most important circumstances which aided the development of Moscow was the fact that the Tatars only reached the Principality after the first force of their fury of devastation had already largely spent itself on the outer fringes of Russian territory. Consequently Moscow's economic life suffered much less ruin and disruption than the outer Principalities; the populations of the latter, seeking to escape the Tatar hordes, sought refuge in Moscow and also Tver. Many settled there, with the result that whilst the population of other Principalities declined, that of Moscow and Tver increased. This in its turn increased their economic strength and the wealth and power of their princes.

Further, geographically, Moscow was very favourably situated, being in the centre of most important river routes from various parts of the country; it was also situated at the junction of important high-ways from south Russia to the north and from Novgorod to Ryazan—all this, of course, also favoured its economic and political growth.

In the constant struggle between the Principalities for mastery, there were distinct signs of the growing strength of Moscow and Tver towards the end of the thirteenth century. From the beginning of the fourteenth century, a fierce struggle raged between the Princes of Tver and Moscow; the former had endeavoured to unite all Russian

lands under himself, but he met determined opposition from Moscow. The "Golden Horde" supported first one side then the other, but finally Ivan Kalita, Prince of Moscow (1325-41) obtained the upper hand, and in 1328 the "Golden Horde" recognized Prince Ivan as the "Grand Prince." This title afterwards remained in the hands of the Moscow dynasty.

Prince Ivan was termed Kalita (the money bag) because he knew how to pile up riches. He was very energetic and wily, knowing well how to use every opportunity to extend his own power. He submitted to the "Horde," carried out their demands in every detail, but succeeded in getting many a concession from them which enhanced his power *vis-à-vis* the other Russian princes. Ivan Kalita already styled himself as "Grand Prince of all Russia"—a title which had been previously adopted by the Tver Grand Prince, Mikhail Yaroslavich.

Although acting with utter ruthlessness towards his rivals, Prince Ivan gave Russia what she much needed at that time, a breathing space, a possibility to recover her strength and unity. He kept order and gave the people a sense of security which they valued highly. As a result of the arrangement which he made and kept with the Tatars, the latter for the time being ceased to plunder Russian territory.

During this time the Principality of Moscow did considerable trade, and in consequence grew in wealth and power. Many boyars (big landowners, nobles) finding it more profitable, transferred their allegiance from other Principalities to the Grand Principality of Moscow, which thus grew in area as a result of the successive inclusion of other Principalities. The Principality of Moscow, as Kiev declined in importance, became the new seat of the Metropolitan See, which also added considerably to its power and prestige.

We shall now take a quick glance at what happened on Russia's western frontiers between the Baltic and Black Seas from the date of the Tatar invasion up to the end of the reign of Grand Prince Ivan in 1341.

As explained on an earlier page, Lithuania attained complete unity under Prince Mindaugas in 1248, and at the time of the Tatar invasion of Russia she was militarily compact and strong.

Russia struggling against her great enemy from the east, the Tatars, had little energy left to protect her western frontiers. This gave the Lithuanian Grand Dukes their opportunity particularly in the first half of the fourteenth century. To quote again from *Nations of To-day*, edited by John Buchan:

Gediminas (1316-41) found the country already pacified by his predecessor Vytenis, who had not only vindicated the right of the rulers of Lithuania to the grand-ducal status, but had made, under the influence of the Vatican, an alliance with Poland. He was a man of remarkable energy and overran a series of Russian principalities, Vitebsk, Minsk, Polesia with Pinsk, Brest, and a considerable part of Volhynia and Podlachia. Nogovorod the Great, Pskov, Smolensk, Chernigov, East Ruthenia and Kiev fell under his influence. He is supposed to have founded Vilna under the influence of a dream, which came to him once when he strayed so far from Troki, his residence, in pursuit of an aurochs, that he had to pass the night where he had slain the animal. The city stands on the hill overlooking the valley where he slept.¹

With regard to Poland—she was so torn by internal strife during the first century after the Tatar invasion of Russia that the role she played prior to about 1340 was of little importance. The Polish historian Roman Dyboski, from whom we have already quoted, states:

For two centuries and more—best part of the twelfth, the whole thirteenth, and one-third of the fourteenth—Poland exists only as a group of warring Principalities: the Grand Ducal Seat of Cracow is always contested, and the authority of the Grand Duke over the other regional princes never recognized.²

However, King Casimir III of Poland (1333-70) made a determined effort to rebuild the weakened fabric of the Polish State, employing the arts of diplomacy more than the weapons of war. He made his peace with the Czech King by ceding to the latter Silesia, and with the Germans by ceding two provinces near the Baltic. Having surrendered to the Czechs and the Germans, Casimir looked eastwards for compensation. He looked towards the Russian lands of East Galicia. Roman Dyboski relates:

The only gain of Casimir's reign, counterbalancing the losses of Silesia and of the Baltic provinces, was, indeed, no inconsiderable one. Ever since the dawn of history wars had been going on between Poland and the south Russian princes for the territory of Red Russia, called in modern times Eastern Galicia, after its ancient capital, the town of Halicz [Galich]. The disintegration of south Russia by territorial divisions and dynastic feuds proceeded even at a more intense rate than that of Poland in the thirteenth century, and Casimir finally profited by the extinction of the provincial line of princes governing the disputed province to take possession of it by virtue of a claim based on dynastic intermarriages (1340).³

¹ *Nations of To-day*, pp. 139-40.

² *Outlines of Polish History*, p. 20.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 41-2.

The evaluation of the claims "based on dynastic marriage" need not concern us. It was naked aggression, the seizure of a Russian province by violence. Actually the Poles raided Galicia and seized Lvov and other towns, claims on "dynastic" grounds followed later. Dyboski does not mention the fact that the Russian State was then struggling with the Tatar invasion, but it is a vital fact which no historian would dispute.

Platonov, recording this and another episode, succinctly states: "About the middle of the fourteenth century, Lithuania seized Volhynia, Poland took Galicia."¹

"The acquisition of Red Russia" (i.e. Eastern Galicia), continues Roman Dyboski, "after the loss of Silesia is a turning-point in the history of Polish foreign policy,"² and he might have added a policy which earned for her the fierce enmity of the Russian peoples and formed an important factor in Poland's extinction as an independent State some four centuries later.

Now to return again to developments within the Russian State—in those very dark days when the Russian Slavs were struggling against the "Golden Horde," the Swedes, the Teutonic Knights, the Lithuanians and the Poles, new vigorous forces were developing within Russia which finally shattered and scattered all her enemies, cleared Russian territory of all invaders, established the Russian State firmly on the shores of the Baltic and Black Seas, transformed the Caspian Sea into a Russian lake and extended the frontiers of the Russian State to the borders of India and to the shores of the Pacific.

The first serious attempt to break the Tatar rule was made by Prince Dmitri Donskoi (1359–89). He became Grand Prince of Moscow in 1362. The reign of Prince Dmitri was particularly important in Russian history, not only because under his leadership the armies of the "Golden Horde" suffered two resounding defeats, but because during this period Moscow played an ever growing role in unifying around her most of the other Russian Principalities. In the struggle against the Tatars, Moscow had the assistance of the Principalities of Suzdal, Rostov, Smolensk and Yaroslav.

Dmitri defeated Prince Mamai's army of the "Golden Horde" on the River Vozha in 1378. The "Horde" realized the tremendous issues at stake and Prince Mamai spent the next two years preparing for a renewed attack on Moscow. He joined forces with Prince Iagailo

¹ *History of Russia*, p. 91.

² *Outlines of Polish History*, p. 42.

of Lithuania as well as with Prince Oleg of Ryazan and gathered together a mighty force not only of the "Horde" itself but of many hirelings against Muscovy. But most of the other Russian Principalities flocked to Dmitri's banner against the common foe and the Tatars suffered a crushing defeat at Kulikovo Field near the Don in 1380. After this Dmitri was called Donskoi.

The significance of the victory over the "Golden Horde" was historic. It broke the spell and demonstrated that the Tatars were not invincible. But the latter had no intention of accepting this defeat as final. In 1382 the "Horde," now under Khan Tokhtamysh, made an unexpected attack on Muscovy. The Russian forces, taken by surprise before they had had time to recover from the strenuous and costly Kulikovo battle, were defeated.

Dmitri, as soon as he heard of the coming of the Tatars, went to the north to collect troops, but following his departure the boyars and metropolitan also left Moscow. Then the people of Moscow and the peasantry of the neighbouring villages took things in their own hands, fought long and desperately for their town, but by a trick the Tatars obtained access to it and having gained the upper hand, carried out a terrific massacre both in Moscow itself and the surrounding countryside. Moscow and the other Principalities were again compelled to pay heavy tribute to the "Golden Horde." The Russian State was not yet sufficiently strong and the Principalities were not sufficiently united to defeat the Tatars.

Although another century passed before the Tatar yoke was effectively broken, the Russian victory at Kulikovo over the "Golden Horde," as already mentioned, was tremendous, because among other things it gave a powerful impetus to national Russian unity under the Grand Prince of Moscow.

As the Russian State integrated, the Tatar State disintegrated, and during the reign of Grand Prince Vasili II (1425-62) civil war was raging between the Tatar Khans; some of the defeated Tatars went so far as to take service with the Grand Prince of Moscow.

Vasili was followed on the throne by his son Grand Prince Ivan III (The Great—1462-1505), who was a capable and vigorous ruler and is generally recognized as the creator of the Russian State. He strengthened the power of the Grand Prince within the State, and brought the Principalities of Yaroslav, Tver, Novgorod, Ryazan and Rostov under the control of Moscow.

He also brought under the control of the latter the lands along the

Dvina and Viatka which had belonged to Novgorod. Moreover, from about 1472 to 1500, Ivan III waged a number of campaigns whereby he acquired for Moscow-Russia the whole extensive northern territory from the Pomorya to the Urals. In the early years of the sixteenth century incursions were also made in the then little-known Transurals. He succeeded in defeating the Kazan Tatars and in keeping the Crimean Khanate from attacking the southern borders of the Moscow-Russian State.

It is important to observe that during the struggle of Ivan III with Novgorod, whilst most of the other Principalities which had entered into the orb of Moscow supported the latter, in Novgorod itself there was a division of loyalties, the common people in the main favoured Moscow whilst the majority of the boyars who saw in Moscow a destroyer of their special privileges and some of the big merchants who regarded Moscow as a competitor for trade along the Baltic, favoured alliance with Lithuania and Poland. The Church, afraid of Catholic influence, also sided with Moscow. In Tver the position was very similar, but the Lithuanians and Poles proved weak reeds upon which the wealthier classes could lean and Moscow triumphed in the end. The treatment meted out by Ivan III on the Novgorod and Tver gentry after repeated revolts was very harsh, but there is no doubt that, on the whole, the common people—the small peasants and small traders—obtained better conditions of life after their union with Moscow.

By the middle of the fifteenth century the Moscow Grand Principality already occupied a very favourable position, not only as said above, geographically, but also politically, as compared with other Russian territories, still preserving their political independence. The main territory of the Moscow Principality was then grouped around one political centre, whilst other Russian territory which did not form part of the Moscow Principality did not constitute compact masses and in many cases they were surrounded by territory under the control of Moscow. Only Pskov and Novgorod still retained their main territories intact. As the economy and trade of the various Russian territories developed, so the intercourse between them increased and frontier barriers became more and more irksome. Moreover, the danger from foreign foes—the Tatars in the east and south, the Germans in the north-west and the Lithuanians and Poles in the west—required a combined Russian effort and Moscow, the then most powerful, politically and economically, and the best situated

Principality, was the natural centre around which the other Russian territories rallied.

It is an interesting fact which throws light on the growing unification of the various Principalities around Moscow into one state that in the literature of even the early fifteenth century dealing with the struggles of Dmitri Donskoi with the Tatars and with Oleg of Ryazan, the former is regarded as the defender of the whole Russian land, whilst the latter, who had entered into relations with the Tatars, is attacked as a traitor to Russia.

In 1480—and this was one of his greatest achievements—Ivan III finally shook off every vestige of dependence on the Khan of the "Golden Horde."

We shall now turn to the record of what happened on Russia's western frontiers between the middle of the fourteenth century—when Lithuania and Poland annexed Volhynia and Galicia respectively—and 1480, when the Tatar yoke was broken.

Of the two States, Lithuania and Poland, the former was much the more powerful in the period of which we are now treating. As we have seen on a previous page, by 1340, Lithuania was in occupation of several Russian provinces on her eastern borders, and Poland was in occupation of the Russian province of Eastern Galicia. By 1480, Lithuania, which with short intervals of comparative peace had continued her encroachments on Russian lands, had strengthened and extended her hold over more Russian Principalities.

To quote again from *Nations of To-day* edited by John Buchan:

The bounds of the Lithuanian Empire reached their farthest point under Keistutis's son Vytautas (1392-1430). . . . He not only annexed definitely Smolensk and Podolia, but even subjected lands lying on the Upper Oka, between Smolensk and Moscow. The Dukedom thus contained not only Lithuania Proper (that is, the territory which in the nineteenth century formed the Russian governments of Kovno, Vilna, Grodno and Suwalki) and the larger part of White Russia and the Ukraine, but also five of the governments of recent Great Russia (Smolensk, Kursk, Kaluga, Tula and Ryazan).¹

How was this Empire held together? The author continued:

The conquered provinces were administered with great tolerance. This was no doubt partly due to the looseness inherent in any widely extended organisation where inter-communication is a matter of great difficulty. Great landowners naturally preferred to spend their time at home on their own

¹ p. 140.

estates and did not cumber themselves with the management of their foreign demesnes so long as the appointed tribute was duly paid. Local customs and languages were therefore left intact, and the task of government was in most cases entrusted to the nobles of the occupied territory. The Grand Dukes were men of common sense and were quick to take advantage of all that was best in the neighbouring civilisations. Gediminas, for instance, had introduced German artisans into the country. The culture of the conquered territories, being on a somewhat higher plane than the pagan civilisation of the conquerors, came to have a great influence upon them. In particular, the Grand Duchesses, who were mostly White Russians, brought with them the Greek rites, which spread rapidly, in marked contrast to the Roman Catholic faith which, propagated by the sword, met with uncompromising hostility.¹

There was no question that the majority of the inhabitants of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were Russian Slavs. The *Encyclopædia Britannica* (p. 905), referring to the period of 1447-92, stated: "Two-thirds of the Grand Duchy consisted of old Russian lands inhabited by men who spoke the Ruthenian language and professed the Orthodox Greek Religion."

To fill in more details in the picture it is necessary to deal briefly with the relations between Lithuania and Poland during this period. Important circles in both States strove to bring about fusion between them by dynastic marriages, such as were often made in western Europe. In 1386 Queen Hedwiga of Poland married Grand Duke Jagello of Lithuania. Commenting on this episode, Roman Dyboski wrote: "The first consequence of the union of Poland with Lithuania was the reception of the new king and the entire population into the Roman Catholic fold. Western Christianity, and the Polish civilisation which comes as its exponent, now get the upper hand in Lithuania over the Russian influences of the early period."² And referring to later developments consequent on this marriage he stated: "With this dynastic union between Poland and Lithuania we enter on a new, and the greatest, period of Polish history. From the Little Poland, shaped into a civilized State by Casimir the Great, we pass into the Greater Poland of the Jagellonian dynasty."³

Fifteen years later, in 1401, an Act of Union between Lithuania and Poland was enacted, but this did not mean in practice the complete union of the two countries. In 1447, the Grand Duke of Lithuania (since 1440) ascended the Polish throne as Casimir IV, and thus the

¹ *Nations of To-day*, p. 140.

² *Outlines of Polish History*, p. 60.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

two countries were united under one monarch. However, during his reign (1447-92) he resisted the fusion of the two countries and a few years later they were ruled separately by two brothers.

To sum up the position at the end of the fifteenth century: the Tatar yoke had been broken in Russia, although the Tatars still continued to live on Russia's eastern and southern frontiers. The royal houses of Lithuania and Poland were closely related but permanent union had not been established. Both States, especially Lithuania, were in occupation of immense thinly populated Russian-Slav territories.

The extent and importance of the Russian provinces seized by the Lithuanian Principality and their comparatively high cultural level, can be gauged from the fact that already in the thirteenth century, Russian was a state language in Lithuania. Official documents and Seim decisions were published in the Russian language. The latter was in use in the law courts and in transactions between the princes. Chronicles, church and other literature of western Russia (under the rule of Lithuania) were also published in Russian. In fact, the Lithuanian Principality was often termed at that time, the Russo-Lithuanian State.

With the establishment of Lithuanian-Polish unity, Polish culture also had a great effect on Lithuania.

In the Russian lands occupied by both Lithuania and Poland the upper classes, at any rate a section of the local nobility, landowners and richer merchants, to a large extent made their peace with the invaders but the landless peasants or serfs in the villages, the small traders and workers in the towns who had to bear the double burden of their native masters and the foreign overlords, revolted against the latter time after time.

It may be mentioned here that the various Russian-Slav tribes inhabiting the Russian western and south-western Provinces occupied by Lithuania and Poland, in view of their prolonged separation from the rest of Russia and their common economic and cultural development, gradually coalesced, and by the beginning of the sixteenth century evolved distinct national, cultural characteristics, as well as their own languages—Byelorussian and Ukrainian.

After the Polish occupation of Galicia, the local Russian population which in the sixteenth century already called themselves Ukrainians, were subjected to the double oppression of Polish landlords and the Roman Catholic Church. Both in the rural and urban areas the local population was subjected to severe repressions of many kinds, such as

the restriction in a variety of ways of the right of the Ukrainians professing the Orthodox faith to own land, to follow trades and professions and to conduct commerce.

Intensive Catholic propaganda aided by the Polish nobility—the Schlakhta, who stood to gain from the dispossession of the Ukrainian nobility—was carried on in town and village by the Catholic Church, but this had very little effect. The attempt to impose the Catholic religion on them was only looked upon as one more manifestation of Polish oppression and as such was resisted by the Ukrainians in every possible way.

The History of the U.S.S.R. mentioned in a previous chapter sums up the main underlying causes of the formation of the Russian State in the following brief and excellent manner:

The fundamental reasons for the creation of the Russian State at the end of the fifteenth century—feudal in its class basis, centralized in its system of administration, autocratic in the organization of its supreme authority and Russian in its ethnographical constitution—must be taken to be the following:

1. The economic development of the Russian lands as expressed by the manifestation of the social divisions of labour and goods exchange as a result of which economic connections between the separate towns and provinces were strengthened.
2. The creation of a strong supreme authority capable of suppressing the resistance of the peasantry was in the class interest of the feudal landowners.
3. The political conditions which made imperative the formation of a centralized State for the struggle against external danger.

The Russian State was at that time still completely cut off from the Baltic. The eastern shores of that sea were in possession of the Swedes, Estonians, Danes, Teutonic Knights, Lithuanians and Poles.

On the shores of the Black Sea the position from the Russian point of view was just as bad. In 1453, the Ottoman Turks captured Constantinople and next proceeded to spread themselves along the western and northern shores of the Black Sea. By 1475, the "Crimean Horde" was a dependency of the Ottoman Empire. The Russian State was cut off from the Black Sea and did not become firmly established on its shores until the period of the Napoleonic wars.

As already mentioned, Ivan III (The Great) is known as the founder of Moscow-Russia. After breaking the Tatar yoke he enunciated a far-sighted programme of Russian expansion, which included the

return of the territories stolen from Russia by Lithuania and Poland during the period of Tatar overlordship, and this policy was adopted and pursued by all of Russia's capable and energetic leaders, and as we shall see in later chapters, was finally accomplished after centuries of struggle.

Chapter III

IMPORTANT VICTORIES OVER THE TATARS AND THE STRUGGLE FOR THE BALTIC COUNTRIES

THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY started well for Moscow-Russia. In its early decades she established relations with the Holy Roman Empire, Hungary, Turkey, Venice and Denmark, i.e. Russia was entering on to the European stage. In 1501 Poland elected Alexander as king and he was also accepted as Grand Duke of Lithuania. The two States agreed that in future they should have a common monarch. In this way a personal union between them was achieved, although complete union had not yet been consummated. In the following year the "Golden Horde," after a bloody struggle with the "Crimean Horde," broke up, which freed Russia's hands for a more effective struggle on her western frontiers.

War broke out between Russia and Lithuania in 1500 and continued till 1503. The Russians inflicted serious defeats on the Lithuanians in 1500 and 1501 and also on the Livonian Order under Walter von Blettenberg, who, jealous of the growing strength of Moscow, became an ally of the Lithuanians. In 1503, the Moscow-Lithuania feud ended by Lithuania agreeing to the reinclusion of many territories on her eastern frontiers in the Moscow-Russian State.

These territories comprised the whole basin of the Upper Oka, the watercourses of the River Desna with its tributaries, part of the lower watercourses of the River Sozhi and the Upper Dnieper.

Peace was also concluded between Moscow and Livonia, the latter agreeing to pay an annual tribute to Moscow for one-time Russian territory still included in Livonia.

Russia's march to the west had restarted and finally ended two centuries later on the shores of the Baltic and three centuries later on the shores of the Black Sea and on the frontiers of Germany. The strengthening of the Moscow-Russian State and the march to the west was continued under Russia's next ruler, Vasili III, 1505-33.

Between 1510 and 1520 the last Russian provinces, Pskov and Ryazan, still until then retaining some degree of independence, were incorporated in Moscow-Russia, thus completing the unification of all the lands inhabited by the Great Russians into, in the main, one State—a Russian State.

When Sigismund I became King of Poland and Grand Prince of Lithuania in 1506, he started to prepare for war with Moscow, endeavouring to form an alliance for this purpose between Poland, Lithuania, Livonia, the Tatars of Kazan and of the Crimea. On the other hand, a number of Russian princes and boyars in Lithuania were preparing a rising within that country in favour of Moscow-Russia. War between Moscow-Russia on the one hand and Lithuania and Poland on the other, broke out in 1507; by 1508 it was concluded by a so-called "eternal peace," whereby Lithuania again recognized the inclusion in the Moscow State of all lands reincorporated in the latter between 1494 and 1503.

However, war broke out again in 1512 and after varying fortunes, Moscow-Russia captured Smolensk in 1514, but the war continued till 1522, when peace was concluded, Smolensk being retained by Moscow-Russia. Smolensk was of great economic and strategic importance to the Russian State. It was the junction of important trade routes, through it passed the shortest route to western Europe and it was an important bastion for strengthening the western frontiers of Russia.

Russia's eastern frontiers were still far from secure, and the fight against the Tatars of Kazan and the Crimea continued. South of the Oka life on the frontiers was extremely hard for the Russian settlements.

In the struggle with the Kazan Tatars during the reigns of Ivan III and Vasili III, Moscow-Russia usually obtained the upper hand, and this led to a considerable strengthening of her military prestige and political influence. Kazan was unable to maintain her independence by her own efforts; her allies against Moscow—the Nogais and the Tatars of the Crimea, who themselves were intent on conquering and despoiling Kazan—were unreliable. Moreover, economically too the ties between Kazan and Moscow-Russia were becoming ever stronger, but it was not until 1552 as stated below that Kazan was incorporated in Russia.

As for the Crimean Tatars, they, for their own ends, helped Lithuania and the Kazan Tatars against Moscow-Russia, and the struggle between the Crimean Khanate and Russia lasted for more than another two hundred years.

It is necessary to mention here that, after the conquest of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453, the Russian Orthodox Church not only became independent, but Moscow gradually became the centre of the Orthodox faith, taking the place in this respect of Constantinople.

Henceforth the Balkan Slavs looked to the Princes of Moscow as the true defenders of the Orthodox faith, and ever since they have looked to Russia as their bulwark-defender against the Turk and Teuton.

When Vasili III died (1533) his son Ivan IV was only three years old, and during the minority of the latter there was considerable competition among the various princely relatives and the boyars for the exercise of State power, each of the aspirants endeavouring to turn the young Prince, as he grew up, in their favour.

In general it was a time of extreme reaction, many free men were again made into serfs, townspeople were mercilessly fleeced and even the lower and middle nobility were subject to spoliation by the big feudal lords. Taking advantage of the confusion and ruin wrought by all this, the Kazan and Crimean Tatars invaded and devastated parts of Russia almost unhindered. Among the common people all this aroused much anger against the reactionary boyars and princelings and their servants and hangers-on. There was fear in Government circles of a popular uprising. Under these circumstances a series of measures was adopted to strengthen the central power; among these was the adoption by the young Ivan IV of the title of Tsar at his coronation, January 16, 1547. The title Tsar was an indication of the absolute power of the Moscow ruler, and since it was equivalent to that of Emperor and above that of King, the step therefore also had considerable international significance.

Ivan IV (the Terrible—1533–84) waged continuous wars to extend Russia's frontiers in the east and also towards the Baltic. He was successful in the former, but not in the latter. The Kazan Tatars were in the habit of making constant raids and robbing and devastating the Russian frontier settlements. Until he had security in the east, Ivan IV could not pay sufficient attention to the settlement of the many internal problems such as the organization and strengthening of a centralized Russia, nor to any endeavour to gain access to the Baltic. Moreover, Kazan stood at the junction of a number of important trade routes. He attacked Kazan, then still a Tatar city, in 1551–2, defeated the Tatars, destroyed the city and built a Russian Kazan.

In 1556 Ivan IV's troops captured Astrakhan and soon after the "Nagai Horde" was also subdued to a state of vassalage to Moscow. The Kazan Khanate was annexed to Russia in 1552, but fighting between the Russians and the natives of the Central Volga—the Tatars, Maris, Chuvashi and Udmurts—continued for the next five years and it was not until 1557 that they were finally subdued.

After the subjugation of the Kazan and Astrakhan Khanates, Ivan IV determined to put an end to the Crimean Khanate, which was now all that was left of the once powerful "Golden Horde" in eastern Europe.

A series of powerful attacks were made in 1556-9, but from 1558 onwards, the Livonian war, with which we deal below, distracted attention from the Crimea, and Moscow-Russia was compelled to limit herself to merely defensive action against the repeated raids on her territory by the Crimean Tatars. There were many such raids; particularly devastating were those of 1571 and 1572.

In 1571 the Khan of the Crimea advanced as far north as Moscow and looted the city. His victory was short-lived. The following year he again attacked Moscow, but was defeated and driven back to the Crimea. From 1558 to 1576 a number of forts were erected and fortified towns built on the eastern, south-eastern and southern frontiers of Russia in order to protect the settlers on the frontiers against the Tatars and Turks.

After establishing herself on the Volga, the Moscow or Russian State was in a position to expand further in the east and south. Moreover, the occupation of Kazan made the Transurals, which was closely connected with the Kazan Khanate, politically and economically, largely dependent on Moscow.

In 1555, the Siberian Khan recognized the overlordship of the Russian State and agreed to pay an annual tribute to the latter. The Siberian Khanate had been formed towards the end of the fifteenth century. The conquest of Astrakhan, which had close ties with the northern and eastern Caucasus, similarly made possible the extension of Russian influence over the Caucasus. Both Turkey and the Crimean Tatars were also anxious to conquer the Caucasus, but in the 1550s many of the Cherkess and Kabardine Princes appealed to Moscow for help against them and declared themselves as vassals of Moscow.

In 1567 the town of Terek, on the Terek River, was built and many Russian settlers came to these lands. True, in 1571, under the pressure of Turkey and in view of the Livonian war, Ivan IV was compelled to evacuate the town of Terek, but this did not prevent Russian Cossacks from continuing to settle there.

It is from the time of the extension of the Russian State to the Volga, Transurals and Caucasus, peopled by many nationalities, that the transformation of the Russian State into a multi-national State may be said to have begun.

War between Russia and Livonia broke out in 1558. There is no

need to enter here into its immediate causes—its underlying cause was the need for Russia to gain a sea outlet on the Baltic. Without such an outlet the trading, political and cultural relations of Russia with western Europe were blocked, at any rate, seriously hindered, by her dependence on Poland, Lithuania and Livonia, all of which, jealous of Russia's rising power, did their best to isolate her. It may also be recalled in passing that the Baltic coast had had long historical ties with Russian lands. It was only in the thirteenth century that German aggression had broken these ties and seized ancient Russian towns in Livonia such as Yuryev.

In addition to Russia, Poland, Lithuania, Germany, Sweden and Denmark all had their eyes fixed on the Baltic. In the sixteenth century, Livonia herself was much too weak to defend her independence against any of these States.

Negotiations with Russia on various points having broken down, Livonia entered into an alliance with Lithuania against Moscow. Towards the end of 1557, and in January 1558, Ivan IV attacked. He won a rapid victory, capturing the important trading ports of Narva, Yuryev (Dorpat or Derpt), the fortress Marienburg and other towns. Under Moscow's powerful blows Livonia was on the point of falling to pieces.

Frightened by these spectacular Russian successes, the other countries interested in the Baltic commenced active intervention in Livonia. In 1561, Livonia practically surrendered her independence to Lithuania and Poland; Sweden and Denmark also entered the fray, whilst Germany blockaded Russia.

In reply to Livonia's union with Lithuania, Ivan IV carried the war into Lithuania. Again he was successful, and in February 1563 Russian troops occupied Polotsk, although the following year the Russians suffered defeat between Ula and Orsha.

After their defeat at Polotsk, the Lithuanian Government started negotiations for peace, expressing readiness to cede all the conquered towns, but this was rejected by the Russian Government, which was determined to conquer the whole of Livonia. This gave Poland her chance to achieve what was in effect the subjugation of Lithuania.

Permanent union between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland was finally achieved by the "Union of Lublin" on July 1, 1569. Under the Union both countries had a common King and Seim (Parliament), but each retained control of its own local administration and army.

As far as Lithuania was concerned it was a forced "Union." This fact is important to recall to-day when Polish *émigré* would-be imperialists refer to the Union of 1569 as a "Union of Hearts." It was a "Union of Violence." Lithuania at that time (1569) was in a very difficult position because her alien subject peoples (Russian Slavs) were in revolt and she was at war with Russia.

In *Nations of To-day*, edited by Mr. John Buchan, the historian states:

In March 1569 an Assembly for this purpose was convoked at Lublin; but the Lithuanians refused to surrender their independence and withdrew. The Poles thereupon collected an army with a view to enforcing their wishes. The Lithuanians, hard-pressed by the Muscovites and weakened by Poland's annexation of the Little Russian Provinces in May and June, had to yield and sign the Union; but only after tearful appeals, made upon bended knee before the King of Poland, had proved unavailing. This was on July 1, 1569, but Lithuania kept a separate administration and her name. Her officials were to be chosen from her own people, and she kept her own laws and finances and her own army. But, although the Union was in theory one of equal with equals, the Poles held the predominance, since they had the majority in the Chambers.

How was that Union viewed by a Russian historian? Platonov states:

By the Union of Lublin the southern half of the Lithuanian Principality, namely, Volhynia, Podlachia, Podolia, and the territory of Kiev became a part of the Kingdom of Poland. The rest of Lithuania remained a separate "Principality" in a "real" or permanent union with the Crown. This was a severe blow to the once powerful State of Lithuania. By taking advantage of the temporary weakness of Lithuania and the strife between the aristocrats and nobles of that country, Poland simply seized half the territory of Lithuania, on the ground that the area in question had long formed part of the possessions of the Polish Crown. From now on the two countries had in common an elected King, a Diet (legislative body), and a Senate (administrative body). Each of them, however, retained its own laws, armies and local institutions.¹

The Kingdom of Poland, as the joint State was henceforth designated, was at this date an extensive Empire, but ethnographical Poland was small. It could be compared with the Empire of Spain in the latter's heyday, except that the Spanish Empire was overseas, but in principle it was constructed similarly.

This "Union" reacted on the course of the Russo-Livonian war

¹ *History of Russia*, p. 194.

because Lithuania and Poland had for centuries sought to keep Russia from the Baltic coast. At the same time another factor became operative in this war, when Sweden, after the termination of the Swedish-Danish war of 1563-70, actively intervened.

Livonia received short shrift from her so-called protectors, the first step being the division of Livonia between Sweden and Lithuania-Poland. Sweden annexed Estonia and Lithuania-Poland annexed Livonia proper. The war now became a struggle of Russia against Lithuania-Poland and Sweden. Even under these more difficult circumstances the Russians were at first successful.

However, within Russia itself some of the boyars who were opposed to Ivan IV's home policy betrayed their country. In particular in 1564 at a critical moment the hitherto trusted commander of one of the armies conducting operations in Lithuania, Prince Kurbsky, deserted to the enemy in return for the gift of large land holdings in Lithuania.

Moreover in 1569 the Turks and their vassal, the Crimean Tatars, attacked the Russians in the hope of annexing Kazan and Astrakhan. Weakened by her long wars with the Tatars and internal treachery, Russia was not strong enough to defeat the Swedes, Poles and Lithuanians and was finally compelled to conclude peace, in 1582-3, under terms which meant that Russia renounced all her gains in Livonia.

Ivan's hopes of establishing Russia on the shores of the Baltic were not realized, but as we shall see in later pages, his aims in this respect were crowned with success just over a century later by Peter the Great. Another important event which occurred in the closing years of Ivan IV's reign was the defeat of the Tatars beyond the Urals and the capture of their capital, Sibir. The final conquest of Siberia by Russia had begun.

Ivan IV was undoubtedly a mixture of cruelty and far-sighted vision. The cruelty was very much fostered by the circumstances in which he grew up and lived and in essence was not so very much different from the habitual cruelties of some other monarchs of the time. He was very passionate and in fits of uncontrollable rage could be guilty of very horrible acts.

But Ivan IV's ruling idea was the organization of a strong centralized State, and everyone (like the big feudal lords of the time) and everything which stood in the way of this aim was swept aside without mercy. And it must be added that the means used by the boyars against Ivan IV were no less merciless.

At the same time Ivan IV was well educated, and his letters and writings prove him to have been a man of considerable intellect. He also had an excellent grasp of statecraft as well as of military and strategic art. His undoing was his unbridled temper and his frequent drunken orgies, which were responsible for some of his cruellest excesses.

It is, however, interesting to note that in so far as folklore gives a reflection of the feelings and views of the common people of the time, this shows that it was not his cruelties alone which impressed them; in the folk-songs and stories of the time he is described as a cruel but just Tsar who added much to the glory of Russia.

Chapter IV

"TIMES OF TROUBLE"

WE SHALL NOW DEAL with the important period which is known in Russian history as the "Times of Trouble," although mainly in so far as this affected the course of Russian-Polish relations. Ivan IV (the Terrible) died in 1584. He was succeeded by his weak-minded son, Feodor, who occupied the throne till his death in 1598, but the real ruler of Russia during this period was the regent Boris Godunov, a prominent boyar of Tatar descent.

Feodor, the last of the Rurik dynasty, died without issue and his half-brother Dmitri, the heir to the throne, also died during Feodor's reign. Boris Godunov was then (1598) elected to the throne by a national assembly.

Both during his own reign and that of Feodor, Boris Godunov carried out a number of land reforms which, though they extended cultivation, also increased the exploitation of the peasantry, and the position of the latter at that time was very hard.

The economic position of the country had been weakened by the wars with her western neighbours; state taxes and feudal oppressions were very heavy; at the same time the lower nobility tried to increase their power whilst the boyars and princes were endeavouring to regain the power and privileges they had lost during the reign of Ivan IV.

In general, Godunov continued the policy of Ivan IV of strengthening the commercial power of the State as well as his policy of favouring the lower nobility as against the powerful boyars. Godunov also endeavoured to secure the hold of Moscow on the southern border regions, Siberia and central and lower Volga territories. To this period belongs the construction of numerous new towns such as Ufa, Samara, Tsaritsin, Saratov, Belgorod, Voronezh, Yeletz and many others. The strengthening of the southern borders of Russia made attacks by the Crimean Tatars much more difficult, and actually they made their last attack on Moscow in 1591, when they were defeated by an army led by Godunov.

As a result of a successful war with Sweden, a number of Russian towns on the Finnish border were returned to Russia in 1595—Yam, Koporye, Ivangorod and Korela. This in its turn stimulated trade with

Sweden and earned for Godunov the support of the Moscow merchants.

The "Times of Troubles" at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries, briefly speaking, was characterized by: (1) peasant rebellions brought about by the endeavour on the part of the boyars and nobles to make good their own economic losses by increasing the exploitation of the peasantry and riveting on them the chains of serfdom. In general, the peasantry were supported by the masses of the urban workers and also by the Cossacks; (2) the struggle of the boyars whose power Ivan IV and Godunov had sought to weaken against the lower nobility whom on the whole these rulers had favoured; (3) the ever active hostility of the Polish-Lithuanian State against Moscow and their desire to reconquer the Russian provinces they had been compelled to surrender earlier.

Desiring to prevent joint action by Russia and Sweden against them, the Government of Poland-Lithuania made great professions of friendship for Moscow, and in 1600 offered the latter an alliance of eternal peace, friendship and mutual assistance against one another's foes. The proposed alliance indeed went almost as far as to lay down in certain respects practically a unified Polish-Lithuanian-Russian State. Godunov rejected the proposals, and only an armistice was concluded.

In 1601-3 occurred a terrible famine in Russia which brought the peasantry to a complete state of despair; starving peasants were roaming about the countryside and dying in their thousands; at the same time came the usual concomitants in time of scarcity—the speculators (among the boyars and merchants) who raised prices enormously and used the opportunity to enrich themselves. The measures taken by the Government to combat some of the effects of the famine were wholly insufficient to stem the growing class antagonism and the revolt of the starving peasantry.

Godunov, although a capable ruler and fine organizer, was quite incapable of overcoming all these difficulties, and the Government of Poland-Lithuania was quick to see its chance. A rumour became current, undoubtedly first spread by the Poles, that Dmitri had not really died but was alive and well in Poland. Sigismund III, King of Poland-Lithuania, gave full support to the Pretender (often called False) Dmitri I, concluding an agreement with him whereby Dmitri promised to cede Smolensk and the northern lands to Poland and to conclude an alliance against Sweden. Pretender Dmitri I also secretly adopted the Roman Catholic religion and promised freedom for

religious (i.e. Roman Catholic) propaganda. He also promised the Jesuits who flocked to his banner to bring about the union of the Orthodox and Catholic Churches. All this secured for him Papal support. All in all, Pretender Dmitri I formed a willing and useful puppet for the Polish-Lithuanian Government, and large numbers of the Polish nobility supported him in the hope of rich rewards of large slices of Russian territory.

At the same time the Polish-Lithuanian Government made skilful use of the very real grievances of the Russian peasantry and other poor working folk, egged them on against Godunov and made lavish promises of beneficial reforms.

In 1604, supported by Polish and Lithuanian nobles and their retinues, as well as by Ukrainian Cossacks who had their own grievances against Moscow—grievances of which the Poles made the fullest use—Pretender Dmitri I marched on Moscow. He met with considerable success, for amongst the boyars there were many ready to use him as a tool against Godunov, even though it might lead to the subjection of their Motherland to a foreign yoke.

In April 1605, Godunov died and his son Feodor ascended the throne, but he was deserted by his ablest general, and afterwards strangled by enemies. Other relatives and supporters of Godunov were treated with equal cruelty. Finally the City Fathers supported the imposter Dmitri, and in June 1605 Pretender Dmitri I triumphantly entered Moscow and was proclaimed Tsar.

Dmitri was beholden to the Polish King and to the Jesuits, and this among other things inevitably led to his ultimate and final undoing. He brought with him to Moscow many Polish and Lithuanian court followers and troops who offended the Russians by trying to force the Catholic religion on them, and by acting as victorious invaders. Dmitri lavished large sums of money on his Polish supporters, whilst most of the promises to the peasants were forgotten.

The Polish lords and soldiers looted the homes of the Muscovites, whilst Polish merchants supplanted the Russian merchants. Pretender Dmitri I found himself under pressure both from the Polish-Lithuanian King and nobles and the Catholic priesthood. The former demanded the surrender of various territories—Smolensk, Dorogobuzh, Novgorod, Pskov, Vyasma, etc., also the right of the Polish troops to march through Moscow on their way to war with Sweden and other demands which Dmitri dared not grant straight away for fear of the reaction of the Russian population thereto. Nor dared he openly fulfil his

pledges to the Catholics. But he did enough in both directions to incense not only the people of Moscow generally, but even some of the boyars who had supported him against Godunov. The Orthodox priesthood was also seething with discontent.

On May 17, 1606, the people of Moscow, under the leadership of Prince Vasili Shuisky, rose against the Pretender Dmitri I and his Polish and Lithuanian camp followers and murdered them wholesale, including Dmitri himself. On May 19, 1606, Vasili Shuisky, who according to contemporary accounts was a very unattractive individual, had himself proclaimed Tsar.

No sooner had Vasili Shuisky ascended the throne than rumours were spread that Pretender Dmitri I had not been killed at all and, what was more serious, the population of Moscow rose against the new Tsar whilst peasants' risings broke out in various parts of the country, the strongest and most successful of which was that led by Bolotnikov (1606-7). The peasantry was the main motive force of this widespread rising, and the movement was directed chiefly against the harsh feudal system with its cruel exploitation of the peasantry. It had considerable success at first, but there was no unity of aim amongst Bolotnikov's supporters, and this spelt its ultimate doom. At important moments of battle, groups of Bolotnikov's supporters went over to Vasili Shuisky and the latter finally crushed the rising.

In the meantime, the Polish-Lithuanian Government, not being in a position militarily to renew their direct attack on Russia, concluded a three years' armistice with Vasili Shuisky, but at the same time were not unwilling to back another adventurer—the Pretender Dmitri II—in a claim to the Russian Tsardom, and thus weakening Russia.

This Pretender, Dmitri II, claimed to be the Tsar Dmitri Ivanovich (Pretender Dmitri I) and to have escaped death in 1606. Sponsored by the Poles and Catholics he arrived in Starodub in June 1607. Here he was joined by peasants in practically permanent revolt against the feudal landlords and by many border Cossacks. He was also joined by many of the lower nobility and officials who were dissatisfied with Shuisky, who in the main represented the boyars' interests. But the main strength of Pretender Dmitri II's army were well-armed and well-trained Polish and Lithuanian soldiers, and it was led and directed by Polish military experts.

In the late spring of 1608, the army of Pretender Dmitri II attacked Vasili Shuisky's army, and by June 1st it had reached Moscow and

encamped at Tushino, about eight miles distant. To Tushino now flocked all those in Moscow who were against Shuisky, from individual princes and nobles who had a score against him to dissatisfied minor officials, as well as those, like some Moscow merchants, who could hope to benefit from dealing with the Pretender. Often enough this support was of a flitting nature, and they deserted the Pretender so soon as they had derived what benefit they could, and vice versa. These various Muscovites changed sides so frequently that they became known popularly as "Birds of Passage."

A number of Russian towns had recognized Pretender Dmitri II soon after his appearance at Starodub; other towns in the Moscow area seized by his Polish-Lithuanian army were pillaged, and the populations forced to pay heavy tribute. The Polish lords received large slices of land from the Pretender Dmitri II and, as during the time of the first Pretender, they behaved like marauders and masters towards the population of these territories. (This army also laid siege, 1608-10, to the rich Troitzk Monastery, but after sixteen months the Poles were forced to desist and to raise the siege.)

The sufferings of the people reached a head at the end of 1608, when risings broke out in the towns occupied by the Pretender.

Although the Pretender (who was himself regarded with contempt by his Polish-Lithuanian backers and masters), or rather his Polish-Lithuanian army, had been unable to seize Moscow, nevertheless they were in a fairly strong position as against Vasili Shuisky. But another factor exerted a powerful influence on the situation. Karl IX, of Sweden, could not afford to allow Poland-Lithuania to become too strong, for he, like the Polish King Sigismund III, had his eyes on Livonia, and moreover Karl IX was afraid of the claims of Sigismund III on the Swedish crown. As for Vasili Shuisky, he was not really popular among any class of his own people, and was only tolerated by his boyars and nobles because of their fear that if he were overthrown the peasant revolts which were constantly breaking out in various parts of the country might get out of hand. Shuisky understood that he could not overcome the Pretender's armies by his own efforts, and he turned to Sweden for help.

The Swedes were willing enough, and in February 1609 a treaty between Shuisky and Karl IX was signed, whereby Sweden gave Russia armed help and in return Vasili Shuisky withdrew all claims on Livonia, ceded the city of Korelo and agreed to conclude eternal peace with Sweden. Then there started a successful campaign against

the Pretender's armies encamped at Tushino. This success was, however, short-lived.

Having at first utilized the Pretender Dmitri II for an indirect or masked attack on Russia, Sigismund III of Poland, supported morally and also materially by the Pope, now considered the time ripe for a direct open attack. The struggle with the Pretenders, the internecine warfare among the princes, boyars and nobles, the peasant risings against their exploiting landowners—all this provided a favourable soil for direct open intervention by Sigismund III.

The conclusion of eternal peace between Shuisky and Sweden was the excuse, and in September 1609 Sigismund attacked Smolensk. Whilst the people of Smolensk put up a truly heroic fight against the foreign foe, the Russian anti-Shuisky section of boyars in Tushino, out of hatred for Shuisky and still more because they feared the success of the peasant risings more than the foreign invader, made an agreement that Sigismund's son, Vladislav, should be proclaimed Tsar.

The agreement concluded February 1610 provided for the administration of the country by this Tsar, assisted by a Boyar Council. It laid down ways and means of raising taxes and promised the inviolability of the person and property, but peasants remained tied to their masters and were forbidden to leave their homes. *Inter alia*, the agreement permitted Polish troops in occupied Russian border towns to remain there temporarily. Polish merchants were to enjoy freedom of trade in Russian towns, and a number of concessions were granted to Catholics.

In the meantime, the Polish-Lithuanian armies, having occupied a number of Russian towns, continued their vigorous attack on Smolensk. Detachments of Russian and Swedish troops were sent by Vasili Shuisky to its aid, but a section of the regiments under Delagarde (the Swedish general) went over to the Poles who, under Zholkevsky, in June 1610, defeated the Russians and Swedes and marched on Moscow. Pretender Dmitri II, who, practically deserted by the Poles, had taken refuge in Kaluga, now also marched on Moscow. Surrounded by enemies outside the gates of the town, disliked intensely by large sections of the citizens within, Shuisky's position was desperate and on July 17, 1610, he was deposed. Prince Mstislavsky, at the head of the boyars, now temporarily assumed power.

Moscow was besieged on the one side by the Poles and Lithuania under Zholkevsky, and by Pretender Dmitri II on the other. Unwilling or too weak to fight, Prince Mstislavsky and the Moscow boyars

chose what, so far as their personal interests were concerned, was the lesser evil, and in August 1610 concluded peace with Zholkevsky—the peace was similar to that of February 1610, and included a proviso that the Poles would assist in driving out Pretender Dmitri II (the latter was subsequently killed December 1610) from Moscow. The Moscow boyars as a whole accepted Vladislav as Tsar, and secretly opened the gates of the Kremlin to Zholkevsky and his Polish-Lithuanian army.

However, there were a number of leading boyars, not to speak of the people generally, of Moscow, who were very much opposed to the Polish invaders. Zholkevsky hit upon an ingenious method of getting rid of many of the leaders of this opposition. He sent a delegation to Sigismund III, who was then at the gates of Smolensk, of some 1,246 persons, including representatives of those Moscow boyar families and others who might be expected to present the greatest opposition to the Poles, to discuss terms of peace. Safe conduct and return to Moscow was naturally guaranteed. Sigismund made it clear to the delegation that he proposed to ascend the Moscow throne himself. He also demanded as a condition for peace the surrender of Smolensk. This the delegation refused, and after long parleys, the delegation, in violation of the previous promise, was arrested and sent to Poland, where they were imprisoned in the Marienburg fortress.

The siege of Smolensk continued. The Smolensk people under their leader Stein fought heroically, but unfortunately plague broke out in the town, the number of those capable of fighting decreased, and finally, aided also by the treachery of a few, the Polish-Lithuanian forces took Smolensk by storm, June 3, 1611.

On his return to Poland, Sigismund III, now completely master of the position, induced a number of the above-mentioned delegation, in return for considerable favours, to take an oath of fealty to himself as Tsar. On their return to Moscow they became the very loyal servants of Sigismund and treated all those who were against the Polish invaders as "traitors." The articles of the August Treaty were violated wholesale. The big landowners received many privileges, whilst the lower and middle nobility, and particularly the peasantry, were ruined.

Although Sigismund III or his son Vladislav might be acceptable to sections of the Russian boyars, the Russian people generally were bitterly opposed to the Polish invaders, and to the election of either of them as Russian Tsar. The arrogant behaviour of the Poles in Moscow and other Russian towns they had seized only served to heighten this

opposition and to rouse the anger of the people to boiling point. Messages, appeals and declarations passed from town to town for a common struggle against the invaders. But the serious conflict of interests between various sections of the Russian population increased the difficulties of their struggle against the Polish-Lithuanian forces, and the first rising (1611)—during which the Poles and those Moscow boyars who supported them set fire to Moscow (March 1611)—failed.

In the middle of 1611, Russia was indeed in a sorry plight: the Polish-Lithuanian forces were in possession of Smolensk, and were in control of Moscow; the Swedes, who originally, in accordance with a Treaty stipulation, had set out to aid the Russians, finished by themselves occupying Novgorod (July 1611) and the Russian liberation movement fell to pieces—but the Russian people did not give up the fight. We have no room here to enter into a lengthy description of the struggle of the Russian people for their national independence, but here is a brief description of the conflict during the period 1609-12, which will give the reader some idea of these stirring times.

For two years—from September 1609 till June 1611—the Smolensk garrison, four thousand strong, defended itself against the besieging Polish army numbering some tens of thousands. When the Russian forces were exhausted, the survivors took refuge in a cathedral and blew themselves up, preferring to die rather than surrender to the enemy.

Together with the peasants, the monks of Troitsa-Sergiev Monastery near Moscow defended their sanctuary, and blocked the way of the Polish army marching on the regions of northern Russia.

At first the Poles won a number of victories over the disunited and poorly armed Russian units. They struck at Moscow, the very heart of Russia, en route, destroying the towns through which they marched, and in 1611 succeeded in capturing Moscow; in the spring of 1611 the Muscovites rose against the invaders, but the uprising failed. The people nevertheless continued to seek a way out and prepared for future struggle.

Following this defeat, the people's movement, led by Kuzma Minin (a merchant) and Dmitri Pozharsky (a member of the lower nobility), again gathered their forces in the autumn of 1611. Minin, who was Mayor of Nizhni-Novgorod, sacrificed all his property to help the defence, and called upon his fellow citizens to do the same. He made fiery speeches all over the country and everywhere found a hearty response.

"Unity and harmony must reign among us, we must rise up for our State," was Minin's appeal. "Citizens of Nizhni-Novgorod! Our people have more than once changed the ploughshare for the sword and thereby gained in strength. Do you want to help our Moscow state? Then we must spare nothing—we must sell our houses, give up all, and if that does not suffice, we shall pledge our wives and children—but our warriors must lack for nothing. Better death than the enemy's yoke! Ours is a great cause! We will triumph, and then what glory shall be ours in the Russian land!"

All the towns of the Upper Volga responded to Minin's appeal, a large sum of money was collected and a strong army raised.

At Minin's suggestion Prince Pozharsky undertook to lead the militia—the armed forces of the patriotic rising. Pozharsky (1578–1642) had previously gained fame for his valiant fight against the invaders. Taking part in the unsuccessful spring revolt of 1611, he had fortified himself in his house in Moscow, had dauntlessly repulsed the attacks of the Poles, and had been severely wounded. Now the volunteer forces, the peasants and the Cossacks—all the people, had risen against the foreign invaders.

A guerilla movement flared up in the regions occupied by the Poles. The invaders felt the wrath and hatred of the Russian people, for the latter did not spare their lives in the fight. The heroic deed of the peasant Ivan Susanin is an example. Guiding a detachment of Poles, he led them astray until they foundered deep in a thick wood. At the sacrifice of his own life he prevented them from carrying out their military task.

In August 1612, the militia, headed by Minin and Pozharsky, reached Moscow. Bitter fighting took place. The Poles entrenched themselves in the Kremlin, but Pozharsky skilfully stormed it.

At one of the crucial moments, Polish troops arrived to help their detachments in Moscow, and tried to cross the Moscow River. Minin, with a group of three hundred men, crossed the river, and by a sudden fierce attack from the flank routed the enemy and captured its food supplies.

After a stubborn struggle the Russians defeated the enemy. On November 8, 1612, the Poles who were besieged in the Kremlin capitulated. The national independence of Russia was restored.

At last the Russian capital was freed of the Poles. This was a great day in Russian history. Moscow was free again, but during the "Times of Trouble" other stretches of Russian territory had been annexed by

Russia's western enemies. Sweden was still in occupation of Novgorod and other territory in north-western Russia, and Poland still held Smolensk and considerable other Russian territory extending even to the east of the Dvina and the Dnieper. By the end of the "Times of Trouble" the Kingdom of Poland—which really meant the joint Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania—extended further into Russian territory than at any other historic period. But as we shall see in subsequent pages half a century later, after the Russian State had become reconsolidated, the tide turned against Poland and the reconquest of the "Lost Western Lands" had begun.

Chapter V

THE TURNING OF THE TIDE

THE "TIMES OF TROUBLE" left a permanent mark on Russian history. They convinced the Russian Slavs of the need for a strong government and consolidated State. After Moscow had been freed from the Poles, the Provisional Government summoned a national convention to choose a new Tsar, and it was decided that he must be a member of the Orthodox Church. Finally, after many candidates had been considered, young Michael Fedorovich Romanov was chosen and he ascended the throne in March 1613.

The youthful monarch faced many complicated tasks. The country was in a difficult economic and financial position. At the same time Polish and Swedish intervention continued, the Nogai Tatars seized a number of towns and even appeared near Moscow and detachments of Cossacks from various directions were also on the march against Moscow.

The State, with the young Tsar's approval and under his direction, began to restore order at home, and to build up the country. Contact was maintained and developed with western countries like England, Holland, Germany, Austria and Denmark; diplomatic relations were also restored with Turkey and Persia, and finally further steps were taken to clear Russian soil of the Swedish and Polish-Lithuanian invaders.

The war with Sweden was partially successful and peace was concluded in 1617, at Stolbov, whereby Novgorod and other Russian cities were restored to the Russian State, although the latter had to renounce Ivangorod and other Russian territory. In September 1615 negotiations for peace started with Poland-Lithuania, but these soon broke down, and in 1617-18, Prince Vladislav (heir-apparent to the Polish-Lithuanian throne) invaded Russia, but failed to take Moscow, thanks again largely to the determined resistance of the population of the latter.

The war was indecisive, and finally, in December 1618, a truce for fourteen and a half years was concluded under which Smolensk and Sieversk were left temporarily in Polish-Lithuanian possession. But Poland-Lithuania refused to recognize the new Moscow Government and did not renounce her claims on Russian territory. The Russian

Government, on the other hand, could not reconcile itself to the permanent loss of Russian territory to Poland-Lithuania and Sweden. The former was the more serious enemy, the more so since Vladislav, the heir-apparent to the Polish throne, still laid claims to the Tsardom.

Sweden was struggling against Poland for hegemony in the Baltic, and after the peace of 1617 sought to draw Moscow into participation in the war against the common enemy, Poland, but Moscow at that time was not ready for war, and limited herself to economic aid to Sweden against Poland.

By 1631, the Moscow Government had become somewhat stronger and began to prepare for more active measures against Poland, and after the death of King Sigismund of Poland in 1632 war again broke out between the two countries.

Russia was still suffering from the effects of the "Times of Trouble" and had not yet sufficiently recovered to wage successful war against Poland. Meeting with some success at first, the Russian army laid siege to Smolensk in the spring of 1633. This siege lasted eight months, during which time Vladislav, having gathered his forces, surrounded the Moscow troops. At the same time the Crimean Tatars, egged on by the Poles, attacked and plundered the southern territories of Russia. The nobles, anxious about their possessions, deserted wholesale and hurried to their estates, and finally, in June 1634, Tsar Michael concluded peace with Poland whereby it was agreed that the latter should keep Smolensk and other Russian cities taken by Poland-Lithuania during the "Times of Trouble." On the other hand, Vladislav finally renounced all his pretences to the Russian Tsardom.¹

The war of 1632-4 and the defeat of Moscow had an extremely bad effect on the course of the economic and political reorganization of the country, and it paralysed Russian foreign policy for the next twenty years or so.

Tsar Michael died in 1645 and was succeeded by his son Alexei, who reigned till 1676. During the early years of the reign of Alexei the economic crisis went from bad to worse; the nobles demanded the complete subjection of the peasantry to serfdom by the abolition of all limiting periods within which a fugitive peasant (and there

¹ Regarding this campaign the Polish historian Roman Dyboski wrote: "By another triumphant expedition into the interior of Russia Vladislav secured the territorial fruit of Sigismund's Russian wars—control over the north-eastern shore of the Baltic and the inland province of Smolensk, as well as two others in the upper reaches of the River Dnieper (1634)." *Outlines of Polish History*, p. 106.

were many such fugitive peasants at that time) could be brought back to his former master. An attempt was also made to institute indirect taxation, which, of course, hit hardest the poorer sections of the people; at the same time, to decrease State expenditure, the salaries, particularly of the lower officials, were reduced. All this, and other circumstances into which we cannot enter here, brought about a great increase in class strife and unrest, and in 1648-50, and again in 1662, there was a series of people's risings in Moscow and other towns. However, the Government was sufficiently strong, with the help of the "reliable" propertied elements of the population, to crush the people's risings.

The latter half of the seventeenth century, particularly towards the close of Alexei's reign, is also characterized by a series of peasant revolts of the poorer sections of the Don Cossacks against the oppression and exploitation of the feudal lords, Tsarist central and local officials and rich upper layers of the settled Cossacks of those regions.

The best known of these risings was that of 1670-1, led by Stepan (Stenka) Razin, which was also joined by the masses of the peasantry along the Volga and other areas. In addition, many of the lower clergy joined the movement.

Stenka Razin's rising had considerable success at first, in most cases wherever he appeared the peasants flocked to his banner, hailing him as a liberator. His was not an anti-Tsarist movement, on the contrary he proclaimed himself as "the defender of the Tsar against the nobility, of the peasantry against the landowners, and of the common people against the Governors." But in spite of brilliant local successes, this—like so many other peasant risings—was not sufficiently co-ordinated and well knit to gain final success over the well-organized and well-equipped regular Government forces.

Stenka Razin was finally captured and tortured to death in Moscow, and this and later peasant risings were crushed and drowned by the Tsarist authorities in rivers of the people's blood.

In the meantime, the slow but nevertheless for that period considerable economic growth of Russia in the seventeenth century led to an extension of her relations with other countries such as Britain and Holland.

In general, in the domain of foreign policy, the eyes of the Russian Government were directed to the west. They sought outlets on the Baltic and Black Seas, and so long as ancient Russian lands (Ukrainian and Byelorussian) were under the domination of Poland-Lithuania, there could be no peace with the latter.

As mentioned on a previous page, after the Polish-Lithuanian "Union of Lublin" in 1569, half of the Lithuanian Principality, mainly the Ukrainian territory namely Volhynia, Podlyashia, Podolia, and the territory of Kiev, came under direct Polish rule.

There was considerable difference between Lithuanian and Polish rule. The former had been more or less tolerant. The latter was brutally intolerant, with the cruelties of the Spanish Inquisition. The Russian-Slav inhabitants of the occupied provinces were subjected to the economic exploitations of imported Polish landlords and to the religious persecution of the Jesuits.

From time to time Poland, being in need of manpower for the Livonian wars and her struggle against Russia, made a number of concessions to Ukrainian Cossacks who were willing to serve in her armies. Lists of these free Cossacks were drawn up and they received gifts of land as well as salaries for service. At the same time the Poles seized both State land and that of the free peasants of Western Ukraine, particularly of Volhynia.

Politically, the Polish Government pursued an intensive campaign of Polenization, and the only class of Ukrainians permitted any political rights were the very rich landowners who were the descendants of former Russian princes or Polish magnates who had settled in the Ukraine.

After the conclusion of the Livonian wars, the Poles carried out a revision of the title deeds of all Ukrainians to their land, and pretexts were generally found for the seizure of Ukrainian land by Polish magnates. Simultaneously they sought to increase Polish influence in the Ukraine by settling Catholics there. Moreover, as a concomitant to the 1569 Lublin Act of Union attempts were made to form a Church Union whereby the local Orthodox Church was to be brought under the influence of the Roman Catholic Church and the Pope. This Church Union was actually brought about in 1596.

"A Church Union"—the Polish historian Roman Dyboski explained what that implied:

"In the interests of Catholicism, which the King (Sigismund III of Poland, 1587-1632) had so much at heart, but also in the interests of the unity of the Polish Empire, the Uniat Church was created in 1596 in order to detach the Eastern Christians [the Russian Slavs] in the border provinces of Poland from connection with the Patriarch of Moscow, who was becoming an instrument of the Tsars, and the Patriarch of Constantinople, who was in the hands of the Turks.

The Eastern Christians of Poland, retaining their Slavonic ritual, recognized the supremacy of the Pope, and thereby were organically linked up with the Roman Catholic body of the Polish State. If the Union did not serve the purposes of consolidation as well as it was intended to do, if the fire of Dis-Uniat opposition was left to smoulder on, if finally the Uniat Church itself could in our own days become the very fortress of Ukrainian separatism against Poland, this was due largely to the illiberal narrow-mindedness of Polish Church dignitaries, who grudged the Uniat prelates the privileges of their rank and thereby stamped the Uniat faith as the Church of the lower people against Roman Catholicism as the religion of the governing class. The nobles who abandoned Eastern Christianity largely became Roman Catholics, and not Uniats, and thereby deepened the social and national gulf."¹

As to the character of Sigismund III, Dyboski wrote: "A bigoted Roman Catholic, he is tainted with the same anti-Protestant fanaticism as his equally sinister elder contemporary at the other end of Catholic Europe—Philip II of Spain."²

In return for a number of privileges, some of the local Church dignitaries and the Polenized Ukrainian magnates accepted the Church Union, but it was fiercely resented by the rank and file lower clergy, the lower nobility and generally by practically all sections of the Ukrainian people, even including some of the higher clergy and rich landowners.

This opposition became a focal point of the national struggle against Polish oppression and became even fiercer as the adoption of the Church Union was followed by the forcible closing of the local Orthodox Churches and the seizure of their property. There were mighty waves of protest and revolt against the Poles. In the towns Church Brotherhoods were formed of parishioners whose object was the preservation of their churches and schools, the publication of Ukrainian books, etc. Such Brotherhoods were formed at different times in Lvov, Brest, Grodno, Pzermysl and other towns. Subsequently these Brotherhoods participated in the armed struggle of the Cossack and peasant masses against Polish oppression and against Polenized Ukrainian traitors.

The first serious Cossack rising under their own elected Hetmen occurred in December 1591, but was speedily suppressed, as were also a number of subsequent risings. In some of these risings even some

¹ *Outlines of Polish History*, pp. 101-2.

² *Ibid.*, p. 108.

of the favoured Cossacks participated, and only a very small number of almost completely Polenized big Ukrainian landowners and Church dignitaries actively supported the Poles.

The suppression of the rising of 1637-8 was followed by an era of more savage repressions and persecutions than ever—economic, religious and cultural.

The Ukraine in the late sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries was politically and economically more backward than its great neighbours, Moscow-Russia on the one hand and Poland-Lithuania on the other, and was much too weak militarily to defend her independence. It was not a choice of independence or dependence, it was merely a choice of which dependence, and so far as the masses of the people were concerned, the Ukrainians emphatically preferred the union with or dependence on Moscow-Russia, with the people of which they had close national cultural and religious ties, rather than the subjection to Poland, whose people, although also Slavs, were more alien to them and whose rule at that time was more onerous than Russian rule. There was also the possibility of their relying on Turkey and the Crimean Tatars, but this, for reasons which we cannot discuss here, was rejected as a major policy.

In general, Moscow at that time supported the more progressive forces in the Ukraine, whereas the Poles were backed by the Polenized landed estate owners and the most reactionary of the higher ranks of the clergy.

It may not be out of place to point out that in the sixteenth century, the chief Ukrainian cultural centres were Lvov and Ostrog, whilst at the beginning of the seventeenth century, Kiev began to take first place in this respect.

The cultural ties between the Ukraine and Russia can be illustrated by the fact that it was a Russian printer, Ivan Feodorov, who set up the first printing works in Lvov, where in 1574 the first Ukrainian books were published. Later books were published in Kiev for Moscow, and Kiev monks went to Moscow to do literary work, such as translations and revisions of religious works. In addition, Ukrainian Orthodox Church leaders maintained close contact with Moscow, to which they looked for material and moral support.

Already in the 'twenties of the seventeenth century, the Kiev Brotherhoods, conscious of their affinities with Moscow and the dangers threatening them from Poland, raised the question of union between Russia and the Ukraine, and when after the rebellion of

1637-8 the Ukrainian leaders had to flee from the Ukraine, they took refuge in Moscow, and indeed throughout every period of Polish oppression, Ukrainians when forced to leave their country fled to Moscow.

The Ukraine also had close economic connection with Russia, and the interests of the Ukraine and Russia in this respect were to a large extent interdependent.

The years 1638-48 were outwardly quiet, but it was undoubtedly a time of preparation for a more determined struggle against Poland. The wide peasant masses, the ordinary (not favoured) Cossacks, the town population and a considerable section of the lower nobility and lower clergy were all united in their hatred of Polish rule. In 1648, under the energetic, courageous and capable Bogdan Khmelnitzki, the movement came to a head. Leading a force of Zaporozhan Cossack and Crimean Tatars (with whom he had concluded an agreement), he attacked the Poles at the beginning of February 1648 and by May 16th utterly routed them. Simultaneously a mass peasant-cossack movement spread over the whole of the Ukraine and forced the Polish Pans to flee from the Ukraine.

The extent to which this was a real people's rising can be gauged from the fact that when Khmelnitzki, rather startled by the amplitude of the peasant movement, sought after his victory a favourable agreement with Poland, the Polish representatives who went to meet him were nearly killed by the Cossacks and peasants and Khmelnitzki was compelled to continue his campaign against the Poles. He again scored successes, became master of the whole of south-western Russia, including Galicia, and when he subsequently went to Kiev he received a tumultuous reception as the liberator of the Ukraine.

Khmelnitzki knew well that if the Ukraine stood alone his successes against the Poles would be short-lived, and he turned his eyes to Moscow for assistance and suggested that Moscow should take the Ukraine under its protection. In this he was supported by the vast majority of the Ukrainian people; on the other hand, whenever Khmelnitzki attempted to parley with the Poles he was fiercely opposed, and even when after being betrayed at a decisive moment by the Crimean Khan (who had been bribed by the Poles for this purpose) Khmelnitzki was compelled to make temporary peace with Poland, it is related that a crowd of some fifty thousand peasants gathered around Khmelnitzki and wanted to kill him for having made peace with the Polish King without consulting them.

This peace was concluded in August 1649 at Zborov. The Zborov peace secured to the Cossacks the Kiev, Bratislav and Chernigov areas, their own administration under elected Elders with Hetman Bogdan Khmelnitzki (now recognized as such by the Poles) at their head; the other local administrative organs were vested in the local orthodox nobility. No Polish troops were to be stationed in the above-mentioned areas. The Treaty stipulated that the number of enlisted and registered Cossacks should be forty thousand; that Jesuits and Jews should not be permitted to reside in the Ukraine; and that Orthodoxy should become dominant.

On the other hand, the rest of the peasantry and the population of the Western Ukraine remained under the domination of the Poles. The Zborov peace thus led to internal dissensions within the Ukraine, for whilst the upper sections—the nobility and Government—were on the whole satisfied, the peasant masses and the townspeople strove, led by a number of national patriots, for a more thorough liberation from the Poles. The latter, who too were not at all content with the weakening of their hold on the Ukraine, were not slow to see that these differences weakened their victim and at the end of 1650 they were already preparing actively for renewing their attack on the Ukraine. It was under these circumstances that early in 1651, Khmelnitzki, as we have already pointed out, at the urge and with the approval of the vast majority of the Ukrainians, entered into close relations with Moscow, requesting that the latter should take the Ukraine under its protection.

In June 1651 the Poles again attacked the Ukraine. They were successful, and in September 1651 Khmelnitzki was compelled to sign a new peace—the Byelo-Tzerkov Peace—more onerous than that of Zborov, and at the beginning of 1652 a wave of cruel Polish repression and persecution started against the Ukrainian people and their leaders.

The struggle by the Ukraine against Poland during these years is thus related by Roman Dyboski:

After alternate efforts at military conquest and conciliation by treaties, the Ukrainian danger increased more and more, as thousands of Ukrainian propaganda agents succeeded in stirring up peasant revolts in the purely Polish inner provinces of the kingdom, particularly among the mountaineers on the south-western frontier. The war with the Cossacks themselves was waged intermittently for many another year, both before and after a great

Polish victory at Beresteczko in 1651. The ruthlessness of this struggle in the borderlands fully justifies the title of the great novel in which Sienkiewicz has described it, *With Fire and Sword*.¹

Poland summoned diplomacy to redress the balance in her favour. Dyboski continued: "The actual danger from Chmielnicki [Khmel-nitzki] only grew less as Polish diplomacy succeeded in depriving him of the support of Turkey and the Tatars. With the loss of this nearest and most valuable ally, Chmielnicki's power began to wane."²

In the meantime the urge for union with Moscow became ever stronger. In Moscow the matter was referred to the National Assembly (Zemski Sobor), which, after prolonged deliberation, decided on October 1, 1653, to take over the Ukraine and to start war against Poland.

In January 1654, the incorporation of the Ukraine in the Russian State was consummated at a meeting of the "General Rada," or "Popular Assembly," at the city of Pereiaslavl, where the Union was formally accepted. The "Rada" shouted in chorus: "We want to belong to the Eastern, Orthodox Tsar!"

Under the terms of the Treaty with Moscow, Russian troops could only be stationed in one town—Kiev; the Ukraine retained the right to elect the chief of the Cossacks—the Hetman; the right to self-government; the right of the local nobility to the possession of their land; and the right to maintain direct foreign relations, except that there could be no dealing with the King of Poland and the Sultan of Turkey without the knowledge of the Tsar.

Subsequently there were certainly friction and matters of dispute between the Russian Government and the Ukraine, and on the whole, of course, the position of the Ukraine as against Russia was that of a vassal, but the Ukrainians chose this with, as it were, their eyes open, for the only alternative was to become the feudal property of Poland or of Turkey, and both these alternatives were passionately rejected by all but a comparative few Polenized Ukrainian landed estate owners and their hangers-on and a small section of Polenized clergy.

In later years the Ukrainian progressive forces, like those of the Great Russian, struggled on the whole unitedly, not for separatism, but for liberation from the Tsarist autocracy, and later still they waged a united struggle against class oppression and exploitation.

It may be added that in the wars the Ukraine and Russia waged

¹ *Outlines of Polish History*, pp. 108-9.

² *Ibid.*, p. 109.

against Poland, Byelorussia invariably supported the two former against the latter.

Following the incorporation of the Ukraine in Russia, diplomatic relations between Russia and Poland were severed. War started in 1654 and was continued with varying fortunes till 1667, when the Truce of Andrusovo was concluded. Under this Truce, Poland retained Lithuania, the Ukraine up to the right bank of the Dnieper except Kiev, and a small area around that city. Russia kept Smolensk, the Sieversk territory, the left bank of the Dnieper and the city of Kiev. This agreement meant that the Ukraine was cut in two and that much of that rich territory still remained under Polish domination.

"This year (1667) marks," wrote Roman Dyboski, "a turning-point in Poland's relations with her powerful enemy in the east. The offensive against Russia, which Poland had been conducting off and on for a hundred years, now comes to a definite end. Poland is driven back on her line of defence, the broad River Dnieper, and even that line is ominously crossed by Russia."¹

Dyboski could have gone even further back and have said that 1648 was a turning-point in Russo-Polish relations because Khmel-nitski's victory over the Poles demonstrated the weakness of the Kingdom of Poland. The Russians realized that Poland was no longer capable of aggression against them. The decline of Poland had definitely begun, and although the Polish-Russian frontiers established in 1667 remained unchanged for a century, the truce of that year put the seal on the decline of Poland.

¹ *Outlines of Polish History*, pp. 109-10.

Chapter VI

FROM THE TRUCE OF ANDRUSOVO (1667) TO THE THIRD PARTITION OF POLAND (1795)

AS MENTIONED IN THE LAST CHAPTER, Russia's frontier with Poland after the Truce of Andrusovo in 1667 remained unchanged for over a hundred years, but much happened within Russia during that century, and also on her eastern, north-western and southern frontiers.

In the Ukraine there was considerable discontent with the Truce of Andrusovo, and the Ukrainians in the territories on the right bank of the Dnieper waged an intensive struggle against the restoration of Polish oppression and for the unification of the Ukraine. In their struggle against Poland some Ukrainian leaders were ready to seek the help of Turkey, even going so far as to recognize the suzerainty of the latter. But this policy was bitterly opposed by the Ukrainian people generally who, once again faced with the choice of Russia, Poland or Turkey as protector, definitely chose Russia.

War for the Ukraine west of the Dnieper broke out between Russia on the one hand and Turkey and the Crimean Tatars on the other in 1676. The Russian armies at first won considerable successes, but Russia was too weak to follow them up, and the war finally concluded in 1681 with the victory of Turkey, to whom Russia was compelled to cede some Ukrainian territory. It may be added that early in 1676, Poland offered to conclude a Treaty with Russia for joint war against the Turks and the Crimean Tatars, but it was discovered that whilst negotiating with Moscow, Poland was at the same time also negotiating with Turkey.

However, the Polish Government did not succeed in concluding an agreement with Turkey, and although they too disliked the terms of the Truce of Andrusovo, which was to run for thirteen and a half years, nevertheless, being themselves hard pressed by the Turks, the Poles agreed in 1686 to conclude an "eternal" peace with Russia on the basis of the terms of the Truce whereby, *inter alia*, Kiev, which according to the Truce had been left in Russian hands for two years, now passed over permanently into the possession of Russia in return for Russian collaboration against the Turks and Crimean Tatars—a proposal that also coincided with Russian interests.

The first two campaigns against the Turks were failures, but Peter the Great (1682-1725) was quick to learn from failures and in 1696,

with the help of the first and only recently constructed ships of the Russian fleet, Azov was captured from the Turks. This important victory fired the imagination of the young, vigorous and talented Tsar Peter with the idea of forming a Grand Christian Alliance to drive the Turks from Europe. For this purpose in 1697-8 he went (incognito) with a grand mission of two hundred and fifty officials, etc., to the principal European countries, but western Europe was not seriously interested and the grandiose scheme never took concrete shape.

On the other hand, the members of the mission did learn a great deal about military art and above all about shipbuilding. The latter was undoubtedly also one of the important objects of the mission, for in order to obtain free access to the Black Sea, the capture of the fortress of Kerch from the Turks was essential, and for this purpose a very strong fleet was required—this Peter had set out to build immediately after Azov had been captured. The mission also established the fact that a limited coalition against Sweden (for mastery of the Baltic coast, without which Russia could not become a western European Power) was possible.

A little later, Peter and Augustus (King of Poland), together with Denmark, conceived the idea of forming an alliance against Sweden, then the most powerful State in northern Europe, and which dominated the Baltic Sea.

Winston Churchill, in his *Marlborough, His Life and Times*, referring to the latter half of the seventeenth century, wrote:

"In the north of Europe, Sweden, the ancient rival of Denmark, was the strongest Power, and aimed at making the Baltic a Swedish lake. At this time the Swedish realm included Finland, Ingria, Esthonia, Livonia, and West Pomerania; and the house of Vasa had traditional designs on Denmark and parts of Poland. The hardy, valiant race of Swedes had impressed upon all Europe the startling effects of a well-trained, warlike professional army."¹

This view was held by all military experts of that time and is endorsed by most distinguished historians.

As regards Charles XII, Churchill described him as "the most furious warrior of modern history," and the historian H. A. L. Fisher in his *History of Europe* stated that: "Even Marlborough was prepared to salute him [Charles XII] as a great master of war."

War with the Sweden of that day was thus a stupendous undertaking.

¹ Vol. I, p. 73.

Peter, anxious not to have a war on his hands with Sweden and Turkey at the same time, concluded peace for thirty years with the latter at Constantinople in 1700 on the basis of the permanent cession to Russia of Azov and its environs, where later the military harbours of Taganrog and Troitsk were built. Immediately after the conclusion of this peace Peter's troops marched north and the "Great Northern War" with Sweden, so fateful for the future of Russia, and which lasted till 1721, commenced. The war was not only long, but costly. Sweden also had at its head a monarch who was young, capable and determined, Charles XII. The latter first attacked Denmark and compelled her to sue for peace in 1700, and in November of the same year his well-equipped and splendidly trained army inflicted a severe defeat on Peter's troops at Narva. The Russian army was not yet sufficiently well trained and equipped to face Sweden's formidable army. Moreover, it was at that time officered by foreigners who did not understand the Russian soldiers and whom the latter hated; nor were these officers always loyal to the Russians. Peter set to work at once to make good the deficiencies, and during the following four years he inflicted a series of defeats on the Swedish forces in the Baltic States. In passing, it may be remarked that so successful were these that in May 1703 the foundations of the famous port and city of St. Petersburg were securely laid.

The fame of the Swedish army was thus sullied by the Russians; it was no longer invincible. During one month of 1704 the Russians took Dorpat, Narva and Ivangorod. Having conquered the mouth of the Neva, Peter set about the organization of a navy in the Baltic. For this purpose shipbuilding yards were hastily constructed on Lake Ladoga, on the Svir River, and at the same time he started the building of the fortress of Kronstadt.

Russia's other ally, Poland, was defeated early in 1706 and compelled to sue for peace. Charles, who was now free to throw all his forces against Russia, invaded her in 1708, confident of success, but after a number of alternate minor victories first by Charles then by Peter, Charles was crushingly defeated at Poltava in June 1709. This Russian victory was of great historical importance, and it was followed by others. Well might Marx say that by his attempt to penetrate into Russia Charles XII had dealt a death blow to Sweden as a great power and demonstrated the fact that Russia was invulnerable.

Peter soon afterwards occupied the Swedish possessions of Riga, Reval, Keksholm and Viborg.

Sweden never recovered from the effects of these defeats, so much so that Swedish dominance in the Baltic Sea and in northern Europe passed definitely to Russia. Charles XII, after his defeat at Poltava, fled to Turkey and persuaded the Sultan to declare war on Russia. The Sultan's forces met with success, and in 1711 Peter was compelled to return Azov to Turkey and to undertake to destroy the forts in Taganrog and Troitzk.

However, Peter continued to wage successful war against Sweden. In 1714 he routed the Swedish Navy, and two years later he expelled the Swedes from the southern shores of the Baltic and also occupied the Aland Islands. Twice—in 1719 and in 1720—he actually invaded Sweden; in the latter year Russian detachments reached Stockholm. Sweden was now beaten beyond recovery and peace was signed between the two countries at Nystad in August 1721.

By this peace Sweden ceded to Russia Livonia, Estonia, Ingria and part of Finland (including Viborg and Keksholm). Thus Russia now held sway over the great water route of the Baltic Sea and possessed not only the mouth of the Neva with St. Petersburg and Kronstadt, but also Riga, Reval and Viborg.

The long struggle between Russia and Sweden thus ended with the total defeat of the latter and the emergence of Russia as a great European Power.

Russia was now not only a great Continental Power, but also had an important European seaboard. The Senate in October 1721 bestowed the title of Emperor of All the Russias on Peter I. Sweden recognized Russia as an Empire in 1723, Austria and Britain only in 1742, and France and Spain in 1745.

Peter also had substantial successes in the south-east. He conducted war against Persia in 1722-3 and occupied the Persian cities of Derbent and Baku. Peace was signed in 1723 and under the terms of the Treaty Persia ceded to Russia the western and southern seaboard of the Caspian with Derbent, Baku, the Province of Gilyan, Mazanderan and Astrabad.

"It is clear," wrote Platonov, "that all the wars fought by the Tsar had for their object the winning of the sea-coasts—the Black Sea (Azov), the Baltic and the Caspian. Peter, far-seeing political genius that he was, realized the importance of the open sea in international intercourse and the progress of civilization."¹

¹ *History of Russia*, p. 230.

Between 1714-20 Peter also sent a number of expeditions to the east which, although not always fulfilling their apparent direct object, did result in the further extension of Russia towards the east and south-east—new fortress towns were constructed such as Omsk, Semipalatinsk and others. By the end of Peter the Great's reign the Russian Empire extended from the Baltic to the Pacific Ocean and formed one of the strongest of the European Powers.

The History of the U.S.S.R. of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. thus characterized the state of affairs in Russia at the beginning of the eighteenth century: "The whole country was in a high state of tension. Factories and workshops were at work or being feverishly erected, roads and canals were being constructed. The Russian army, well equipped and modernized in accordance with foreign standards, had inflicted a crushing defeat on the first-class Swedish army which in the seventeenth century had marched victoriously over the whole of northern Europe. The young Russian fleet, with the odour of fresh timber still clinging to it, had gone out to the Baltic and had resoundingly defeated the strong Swedish squadron. Russian regiments were marching across Pomerania; in the Copenhagen roadsteads stood Russian frigates."

In the carrying out of his many far-sighted reforms, Peter certainly did not use a velvet glove. He was essentially a product of his time—the feudal time—and as Lenin so well said, "Peter accelerated the adoption of western ways by the then barbarian Russia and never hesitated to use barbarous methods of struggle against barbarism."

The work carried out by Peter the Great in the development of Russia and the strengthening of her internal and external position was undoubtedly immense, but the burden of it, as is generally the case in all class societies, was borne by the masses of the people—in this case particularly the peasants—who enjoyed little if any of its benefits. As a result of this and of the severe colonial regime, there were a number of peasant risings between 1705-11 in various parts of the country, including the Bulavin Revolt of 1707-8, which was the most serious of them all. The revolting peasants, however, were not sufficiently united and strong to attain their aims, and the risings were repressed with the utmost cruelty. In this connection it may not be without interest to quote here what Stalin said about Peter's role in Russian history in the course of his interview with Emil Ludwig, December 13, 1931:

Peter the Great did much for the aggrandisement of the landowning class and for the development of the rising merchant class. Peter did a great deal for the creation and the consolidation of the national State of landowners and merchants. It may also be said that the aggrandisement of the landowning class, the assistance rendered to the growing merchant class and the consolidation of the national State of these classes proceeded at the expense of the peasant serfs, who were thus thrice robbed.

Russia and Turkey were again at war 1735-9. Russian forces captured the important fortress of Ochakov and invaded the Crimea, whose Tatar inhabitants were the vassals of Turkey. In 1739 the Russians captured the Turkish fortress of Khotin.

Russia had conducted this war in alliance with Austria which, having won a number of victories against Turkey, decided to make a peace advantageous to herself in 1739. Russia, having sustained enormous losses of manpower and armaments, in spite of her general success against the Turks, was compelled to follow suit. Under the Russo-Turkish Treaty of Belgrade (1739) Russia, it is true, obtained big stretches of steppe territory near the Black Sea coast, but the seaboard itself was still denied her; moreover, although Azov was returned to Russia she had to undertake not to fortify it and not to maintain a navy in the Black Sea.

On the other hand, Russia obtained large stretches of land along the right bank of the Dnieper towards the Dniester and thus cut off Poland from direct exit to the sea, which made Poland even more dependent, politically and economically, on Russia, than she had already become in 1721 when the latter acquired the Baltic coast.

Russia was now much stronger, while Poland was much weaker absolutely and relatively to her eastern neighbour who, as we have already pointed out, had now become one of the great Powers of Europe. Poland's weakness was not only external, it was also internal. Roman Dyboski painted a terrible, graphic picture of conditions in Poland in the eighteenth century prior to the first partition of that country in 1772. Regarding the lack of civic spirit he wrote: "Civic spirit in Poland sinks to its lowest level during the dissolute peace under Augustus III (1733-63), who is as indolent and luxurious as his father has been reckless and adventurous. In the father's reign, Saxon, Russian and Swedish troops had continually marched all over Poland, imposing and dethroning kings, and incidentally devastating the country; under the son, the all-powerful Saxon finance minister, Bruehl, sucked the Polish State dry, while the Polish gentry revelled in brutish

material enjoyment, as if they said to themselves: 'Let us eat and drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die.' It was, as a Polish satirist said, a Shrovetide of licentious pleasures, after which the severe fasts of a long Lenten period of captivity were duly bound to come."¹

With respect to religion, Dyboski stated: "Another great evil—religious obscurantism—had set in with the strenuous counter-Reformation conducted by the first king of the Vasa dynasty, and had never ceased to grow since. The sect of the Arians, rich in highly enlightened citizens, was hunted out of the country already in the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth, other Protestant sects, limited in the exercise of their religion, were further limited in their political rights, being made ineligible both for Parliament and for public office. In 1724, European opinion was stirred by the execution of the mayor and nine aldermen of the Polish town of Torun (Thorn) for the anti-Jesuit excesses of a Protestant mob; only the death of Peter the Great saved Poland from joint intervention of all the non-Catholic monarchs on account of this cruel sentence."²

As to the general decay of learning, Dyboski continued: "The chief reason for such outbursts of intolerant bigotry was the third great disease of the Polish Commonwealth, next to political anarchy and religious fanaticism, viz., the decay of learning. It is closely connected with religious matters, being chiefly due to the Jesuits, who held the monopoly of teaching. They restrained education almost wholly to mechanical mastery of Latin and the outworn speculations of scholastic philosophy. The result was a corruption of the Polish language by latinisms on the one hand, and backwardness, narrow-mindedness and ignorance in the most important matters of science and of life on the other. Literature lapsed into bathos and the sheer stupidity of panegyrics or devotionism; superstition became rampant; instead of the once fashionable studies in Italian Universities, pilgrimages to miraculous shrines became the predominant form of foreign travel; and professors of Polish Universities descended to such occupations as astrological fortune-telling or the composition of almanacs. The University of Cracow was the last in Europe to adopt the astronomical system of one who had been its pupil—the great Polish astronomer Copernicus."³

And politically the Polish State was rapidly disintegrating. Dyboski declared: "This increasing outward weakness of the Polish State was

¹ *Outlines of Polish History*, p. 120.

² *Ibid.*, p. 123.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

accompanied by growing dissolution of the constitutional fabric within. The practice has now set in for good that resolutions, passed by a majority in a parliamentary body, may be vetoed by the protest of an individual member under a formal pretext. The use of this destructive privilege wrecks all the parliaments in the reign of the second Saxon king, with one solitary exception. On one occasion even the session of the supreme Court of Law for Poland is broken up by this disastrous 'Free Veto,' and the whole western half of the monarchy is left for a time without the chief organ of justice. The adage 'Poland is governed by want of government' is being stupidly repeated, as if it was a liberal maxim of political wisdom, and not a 'writing on the wall' foretelling the wrath of God."¹

We repeat, this picture terrible and prophetic was portrayed by a Polish historian, but it was not the whole story. The part of the Ukraine and Byelorussia which remained in Polish possession was in a state of even greater misery than the rest of Poland—here, added to the cruel economic oppression of the peasantry by the Polish nobility there was also a deliberate national, cultural and religious oppression of all classes of the native population. There were no schools in the native language nor could the latter be used in the law courts. The risings of the Ukrainians which broke out from time to time were stamped out, but only in rivers of blood. Already in the early years of Catherine's reign, the Orthodox Byelorussians under Polish domination appealed to her for protection.

Respecting the treatment of the "Orthodox," mainly Byelorussians and Ukrainians, Platonov related: "The Orthodox were not allowed to build or even to repair Orthodox churches; Catholics censored Orthodox prayer books; special taxes for the benefit of the Catholic clergy were imposed upon the Orthodox communicants; the Orthodox were subject to the authority of a Catholic ecclesiastical tribunal; finally Orthodox Russians were denied the right of holding public office and to become deputies of the Diet."²

It may be urged that Platonov was a Russian historian and therefore prejudiced, but the *Encyclopædia Britannica* is just as severe in its stricture: "The dissidents had no political rights, and their religious liberties had also been unjustly restricted."³ The same authority described the agricultural labourers, artisans and petty tradesmen as "ignorant and illiterate."

¹ *Outlines of Polish History*, pp. 122-3.

² *History of Russia*, p. 290.

³ p. 918.

Respecting the lives led by the great Polish landowning families apart from the Czartoryscy who had endeavoured to save the State, the *Encyclopædia Britannica* states: "Unfortunately the other great families of Poland were obstinately opposed to any other reform or, as they called it, any 'violation' of the existing constitution. The Potoccy, whose possessions in south Poland and the Ukraine covered thousands of square miles, the Radziwillowie, who were omnipotent in Lithuania and included half a dozen millionaires (Radziwill alone was worth thirty millions) amongst them, the Lubomirscy and their fellows, hated the Czartoryscy because they were too eminent, and successfully obstructed all their well-meant efforts. The castles of these great lords were the foci of the social and political life of their respective provinces. Here they lived like little princes, surrounded by thousands of retainers, whom they kept for show alone, making no attempt to organize and discipline excellent military material for the defence of their defenceless country. Here congregated hundreds of the younger szlachta, fresh from their school benches, whence they brought nothing but a smattering of Latin and a determination to make their way by absolute subservience to their 'elder brethren,' the pans. These were the men who, a little later, at the bidding of their 'benefactors,' dissolved one inconvenient Diet after another; for it is a significant fact that during the reigns of the two Augustuses every Diet was dissolved in this way by the hirelings of some great lord, or, still worse, of some foreign potentate. In a word constitutional government had practically ceased, and Poland had become an arena in which contesting clans strove together for the mastery."¹

Such was the state of the Kingdom of Poland, particularly in the seventeen-sixties, a once powerful Kingdom now staggering helplessly and hopelessly to its doom.

It may be as well to mention here that runaway serfs from the neighbouring Russian provinces in the eighteenth century sometimes sought refuge in Poland. The Lithuanian and Polish landowners welcomed these refugees, granting them land in the comparatively sparsely inhabited Ukraine and Byelorussia, although ultimately these refugees were subjected to the same economic exploitation and national and cultural oppression as the native Ukrainians and Byelorussians.

Demands by Russia for the return of the peasants were ignored, and both the Russian Government and the Russian landowners themselves sent detachments to seize the fugitives; and in order to prevent the

¹ p. 917.

flight of the peasants, Catherine proposed to rectify the eastern boundaries of Poland.

After Russia had gained the Baltic port of Riga (1721), the mouth of the Western Dvina was controlled by Russia, and in so far as the Western Dvina was a first-class trade route of immense economic importance to Russian merchants, the separation of the territory along the Dvina from Poland had become only a question of time.

Russia, Austria and Prussia were all watching events in Poland. When in October 1762 Augustus III of Poland died, there was a tussle between groups of Polish magnates as to who should succeed him. One section actually appealed to Catherine II of Russia for support and Russian imperial troops crossed the Polish frontiers at various points. Russian influence won the day and Catherine's favourite Poniatovsky, a Polish nobleman, was elected King of Poland, October 1764, ascending the throne as Augustus IV. Shortly afterwards Catherine the Great of Russia and Frederick the Great of Prussia strongly urged Augustus to grant the Orthodox equal rights with the Catholics. The proposal was rejected by the Polish Diet. The only concession made was the right to maintain their Orthodox worship and to restore churches which had become completely unusable.

On the other hand, certain reforms carried out by the Diet under the new king aroused discontent among the more reactionary Polish magnates, who hated Augustus IV. A confederation of Protestants was formed in Thorn, and of Orthodox in Slutsk.

Catherine's agents made the most of these dissensions and even promised to deprive Augustus IV of his throne if only the Polish-Lithuanian nobility would agree to grant equal rights to the dissidents. A confederation advocating such equal rights meeting in Radom in 1767, and a little later transferred to Warsaw, requested Russian support, and Russian troops were again sent to Warsaw. Finally, in October 1767, an extraordinary session of the Polish Diet was called at which, in spite of strong opposition, a law was passed granting all denominations equal rights with Roman Catholics. The law was not without qualifications, because it left Roman Catholicism as the dominating creed and the right to the throne was reserved to Catholics.

Poland signed a Convention with Russia in 1768, under which Catherine pledged herself to protect the political organization of Poland and Lithuania. This pledge established, as it were, a Russian protectorate over Poland and gave Russia the right to interfere in the

domestic affairs of her neighbouring State. A similar pledge was also given by Frederick II of Prussia.

Catholic Poland bitterly resented this subservience to Orthodox Russia, and the "Confederates of the Bar" (i.e. a Confederation formed in the town of Bar) was formed in defence of "Faith and Fatherland." Similar Confederations were formed in other towns, but all of them were concerned not merely with combating subservience to a foreign Power—they were just as much if not more eager to suppress all religious sects other than Catholic. This in its turn led to a widespread revolt of the peasantry in Byelorussia and the Ukraine against the Roman Catholic Polish landowners. Russia intervened against the "Confederates of the Bar." Austria, which aided the "Confederates," and Prussia were also drawn in and sent troops to Poland. Finally, that great Russian military leader Suvorov captured Cracow and routed the "Confederates."

The revolt was crushed, but Russian, Prussian and Austrian troops remained in occupation of Poland. They claimed that they were entitled to compensation for the losses which they had incurred. The most durable compensation was territory.

Frederick II of Prussia suggested to Catherine II to divide a part of Poland between Prussia, Austria and Russia. Catherine at first declined, for she was in no way interested in extending Prussian territory, but Prussian and Austrian pressure on Catherine at last had effect, and in 1772 the First Partition of Poland was consummated. Detailing this Partition the *Encyclopædia Britannica* stated: "Russia obtained the palatinates of Vitebsk, Polotsk, Mstislav: 1,586 sq. miles of territory, with a population of 550,000 and an annual revenue of 920,000 Polish gulden. Austria got the greater part of Galicia, minus Cracow: 1,710 sq. miles, with a population of 816,000, and an annual revenue of 1,408,000 gulden. Prussia received the maritime palatinate minus Danzig, the palatinates of Marienburg and Ermeland: 629 sq. miles, with a population of 378,000, and an annual revenue of 534,000 thalers."¹

Commenting on this Partition, Platonov wrote: "This division of Polish territory took place in 1772 and is known as the First Partition of Poland. Catherine was not quite satisfied with the result. She thought that Prussia and Austria got a great deal more than they deserved, considering the little work they had done. She felt particularly aggrieved that Austria had secured territory that was fundamentally Russian."²

¹ p. 918.

² *History of Russia*, p. 294.

Platonov was referring to the old Russian province of Eastern Galicia—dealt with in previous chapters—which was annexed by Austria in this first Partition. Meanwhile “adversity” had made “strange bedfellows.” Turkey, becoming alarmed at the growing strength of Russia, made common cause with Poland and declared war on Russia in 1768, while the troops of the latter were still fighting in Poland.

Although the outbreak of the war caught Russia unprepared, the Turks were finally defeated on land and sea in 1774. In this war too, General Suvorov distinguished himself. But the strong peasant revolts in the Volga provinces (particularly that led by Pugachev, 1773–5) prevented Catherine from continuing the war to an even more victorious conclusion; however, the peace which was signed in July 1774 was highly favourable to Russia. Under the Treaty:

1. All the Tatars living on the northern shores of the Black Sea, including the Crimean Khanate, and on the coasts of the Sea of Azov, were recognized as independent of the Turkish Sultan.
2. Russia obtained Azov, Kerch (with the fortress of Ienikale and the fortress of Kinburn, in other words, the outlets of the Don, Bug and Dnieper), together with the Straits of Kerch. The River Bug was to form the frontier on the south-west. Russia was empowered to fortify Azov.
3. Russian subjects and traders secured the special protection of the Turkish authorities and her merchant vessels had the same rights of sailing the Black Sea and the Straits as British and French vessels.
4. Turkey undertook to pay to Russia an indemnity of four and a half million roubles.

Nine years later (1783) Russia definitely annexed the Crimea. The new provinces of Russia, immense fertile areas on the shores of the Black Sea and Azov with a good seaboard and fine harbours and sparsely inhabited, were a tremendous acquisition. These territories were called Novorossia (New Russia) and Catherine, with the help of able ministers, made a determined effort to develop them. However, whilst Catherine was making a ceremonial tour of the provinces, Turkey again declared war on Russia in 1787. Suvorov again scored brilliant victories and Turkey was severely beaten. Under the terms of the Treaty signed in 1791, Turkey recognized the Russian annexation of the Crimea, and ceded the famous fortress of Ochakov and the territories situated between the Rivers Bug and Dniester.

The war of 1787–91 with Turkey was rendered the more difficult since Sweden decided to take advantage of Russia's preoccupation with

Turkey to make an attempt (1788) to reconquer the territories she had lost to Peter the Great. However, although it caused much uneasiness in Russia at the time, Sweden gained nothing from her attack, and when peace was concluded in 1790, the frontiers of Russia remained unchanged.

Meanwhile, during the second half of the eighteenth century, the economic position of Poland had, for a variety of reasons, somewhat improved, but for Poland to achieve political stability and retain her independence it was essential to carry through fundamental agrarian reforms and to break the dictatorship of the Szlachta (nobility).

A heroic but fruitless attempt was made by a large group of Polish patriots to pull the country together. The famous Constitution of May 3, 1791, modelled to some extent on the French Constitution, was accepted by the Diet and had it been applied might, probably would, have done much to strengthen the internal administration of the country. However, it was not nearly as progressive as many Polish apologists would have the world believe to-day. Roman Dybowski wrote: "The Constitution is much less revolutionary—in fact, it is essentially conservative, on the social side. It preserves the traditional division of Polish society into three classes: nobles, townsmen and peasants, with different civic rights for each class and different organs of jurisdiction for them. It leaves the gentry in possession of all its ancient privileges; it does not set the peasant free from the yoke of serfdom."¹

But, limited though this Constitution was, the more reactionary forces within Poland called on Russia in consonance with the Treaty of 1768 to intervene and prevent its application. Catherine was not at all loth to do so. A Russian army occupied Warsaw in 1792, while Prussia, hastening to follow suit, occupied the western provinces. Russia and Prussia put the blame for events in Poland on the French Revolution and proceeded to get their own advantage therefrom.

Occupation paved the way for the Second Partition, which took place in 1793. "By this *pactum subjectionis*, as the Polish patriots called it," states the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Russia got all the eastern provinces of Poland, extending from Livonia to Moldavia, comprising a quarter of a million of square miles, while Prussia got Dobrzyn, Kujavia and the greater part of Great Poland, with Thorn and Danzig. Poland was now reduced to one-third of her original dimensions, with a population of about three and a half millions."²

Austria was promised compensation at the expense of France in the

¹ *Outlines of Polish History*, p. 144.

² p. 920.

near future when the Allied Powers had succeeded in shattering that revolutionary State. Russia, it should be noted, only received back ancient Russian territory which had been annexed by Poland.

The small part of Poland still retaining its independence had no seaboard and was wholly dependent for its existence as a State on the strong reactionary Powers which surrounded her. Under such conditions life was extremely difficult for the inhabitants both in the urban and rural areas. At the same time there was a growing agitation against the foreign ascendancy over Poland and against the confederates who had been directly instrumental in bringing about these disasters. There were also demands by the people for a democratization of the regime in Poland—in short, the position was decidedly revolutionary. Tadeus Kosciusko (who is now regarded as one of the great Polish patriot leaders) took the lead in the rising against the foreign yoke. The Polish peasantry who hoped to attain their own liberation at first supported the rising, and with their help Kosciusko won some local victories against the Tsarist troops and the Polish police who opposed him. However, the hopes of the peasantry were not realized and they then took up a passive attitude. Risings occurred in a number of towns, but finally the revolts were all crushed by Russian, Prussian and Austrian troops. After Suvorov had taken Warsaw, November 1794, the revolt was at an end; in 1795 the Third Partition of Poland took place and Poland as an independent State ceased to exist.

"On the 24th of October 1795 Prussia acceded to the Austro-Russian partition compact of the 3rd of January," records the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "and the distribution of the conquered provinces was finally regulated on the 10th of October 1796. By the third treaty of Partition Austria had to be content with Western Galicia and Southern Masovia; Prussia took Podlachia, and the rest of Masovia, with Warsaw; and Russia took the rest."¹

It is sometimes forgotten to-day that under the Third Partition Warsaw was left in Prussian hands. It was Prussia too which received the bulk of ethnographical Polish territory.

"The final partition of Poland was accomplished between the same three powers which had taken part in the first," wrote Dyboski. "In this division of spoils Austria and Prussia received large portions of western Poland, which in the course of the nineteenth century passed into the hands of Russia and formed part of the province known before the Great War [1914-18] as Russian Poland. Even Warsaw,

¹ p. 920.

after the partitions, was for a time governed by Prussians, as it was again in the first years of the [first] World War."¹ In a further comment he wrote: "Warsaw and a large part of later Russian Poland, during the first ten years after the last partition, was under Prussia."²

In considering these three partitions one outstanding fact, vital for a correct judgment, is often overlooked, e.g. that, as we stated before, although Russia annexed Lithuania and Courland, she did not annex any ethnographically Polish territory—she liberated and restored to the Motherland Russian territory which had been seized by Lithuania and Poland during the Tatar invasion and the "Times of Trouble."

In May 1920, when the question of Russo-Polish frontiers was being very much discussed in the British Press, and for that matter throughout the world, a contributor in *The Times* wrote: "Without entering into historical details, it is permissible to affirm that by the three consecutive partitions of Poland, Russia acquired no land which was indisputably Polish, but only ancient Russian and Lithuanian territory, which had been united to Poland."³

The Russian State after the Third Partition of Poland (1795) was one of the greatest of the then world States. In the east her pioneers had reached the Pacific, in the south she was firmly established on the shores of the Caspian and Black Seas, in the west she had recovered all the "lost lands" except Eastern Galicia which had been annexed by Austria (1772) to the bitter disappointment of the Russian Government. Russia had inflicted crushing defeats on her traditional enemies, the Tatars, the Teutonic Knights, Sweden, Lithuania, Poland and Turkey and was now far stronger than any of these States.

Was this an accident? Was it a fortuitous circumstance or was it because there was something in the Russian Slavs which these invaders of Russian territory lacked? Manuilsky, the veteran member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R., has given a very just estimate of the significance of the evolution of Russia. He wrote:

Enemies have pressed in on the Russian land from all sides from west and east, from north and south.

The Tatars moved on Russia, the Teutons crawled forward like locusts, the Poles came like ravens, the Swedes, the Turks. Many times in unequal struggle our warrior people suffered failures and defeats and the enemy prepared to celebrate the downfall of Russia. But every time, like Antheus on

¹ *Outlines of Polish History*, p. 164.

² *Ibid.*, p. 166.

³ *The Times*, May 19, 1920.

touching the earth, our people gathered new miraculous strength and raised themselves up again, grim and terrible, in all their greatness.

Swiftly they healed their wounds and again drew the sword. They drove out the Mongols, the Germans, the Swedes and Poles, fighting selflessly for their State existence. The blood of our fathers and grandfathers created the great State covering almost 22,000,000 square kilometres that has now become the mighty Soviet Union.

Manuilsky concluded:

Is this an accident of history? Such accidents do not happen in history. Only a warrior people, a people of heroes, could create such a State and create it while their feudal princelings were fighting amongst themselves in the face of the aggressors advancing on Russian soil, when the ruling classes of old Russia throttled for centuries the creative forces of the people.

Chapter VII

FROM THE THIRD PARTITION TO THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA

THE THIRD PARTITION OF POLAND took place in the stirring days of the French Revolution, but here we are only concerned with the Napoleonic wars in so far as they affected Russian-Polish relations. In 1805, England and Russia signed a Treaty to resist the further encroachments of Napoleon. The line-up then was Great Britain, Russia, Sweden and Austria on one side, France, Spain and the southern German States on the other. Prussia remained aloof. After Napoleon's victory at Austerlitz in December 1805 over the Russian and Austrian armies, Austria concluded a separate peace with Napoleon, but the Tsar retreated with the remnants of his army to Russian territory.

Napoleon did all he could to enlist the Poles on his side by promising delegations who came to see him to reunite to Poland the territories she had lost and to re-establish full Polish independence. This, naturally, more than ever predisposed an alliance between the Powers whose territory was threatened, and in the following year (1806) Russia entered into an Alliance with Prussia, but after the troops of the latter had been defeated by Napoleon at Jena and Auerstadt, October 1806, not only Berlin but Prussian and conquered Polish territory up to the Vistula was occupied by French troops.

Napoleon now began to help and encourage Turkey to attack Russia, and in 1806 war broke out between Russia and Turkey, the main reason for Turkey's attack on Russia being the expansion of the latter to Transcaucasia. This war lasted, with interruptions, till 1812. The same causes also led to the Russo-Persian war of 1805-13.

In November 1806 Napoleon issued a decree declaring the blockade of Britain—this led to a further drawing together of Russia and Britain. In February 1807, in order to help Russia, Great Britain declared war on Turkey. But apart from this act both Turkey and Persia received sometimes open but more often secret support from both France and Britain for, of course, different reasons. Finally the Turks were defeated at Slobozia, on the left bank of the Danube, in 1811, and under the Peace Treaty signed in 1812, Turkey ceded Bessarabia to Russia.

Napoleon spent the winter of 1806-7 in Warsaw, and on June 14,

1807, after a series of indecisive battles, he defeated the Russian army at Friedland. Russia and Prussia asked Napoleon for an armistice, and on June 25, 1807, the famous meeting at Tilsit between Napoleon and Alexander I of Russia took place. William III of Prussia joined them later. The peace concluded July 8, 1807, was extremely onerous on Russia, forcing her to enter Napoleon's Continental system and to break off relations with Britain—a step highly detrimental to the Russian national economy.

Under the peace terms, Warsaw and some surrounding territory were detached from Prussia and recognized as an independent State under the name "The Grand Duchy of Warsaw" with the King of Saxony as the Grand Duke. Bialystok (ceded to Prussia in the Third Partition of Poland) was handed over to Russia. At the same time, as compensation for the other hard clauses of the Treaty of Tilsit, Napoleon gave Russia a free hand in the east and undertook to cease all help and encouragement to Turkey against Russia. He also gave the latter a free hand against Sweden in so far as Finland was concerned.

The Grand Duchy of Warsaw was independent only in name. Napoleon's aim was not to set up an independent State, but to weaken Prussia. It was a French province in everything but name and it could form a convenient jumping-off ground for a future attack on Russia.

"The constitution of the little State" declared the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "was dictated by Napoleon, and, subject to the exigencies of war, was on the French model. Equality before the law, absolute religious toleration and local autonomy, were its salient features. The King of Saxony, as Grand Duke, took the initiative in all legislative matters, but the administration was practically controlled by the French."¹

After the Peace of Tilsit, Russia declared war on Sweden, a war which continued during 1808 and 1809. Under the peace terms signed in the latter year, Russia annexed Finland up to the River Tornea and the Aland Isles. But in general, the Peace of Tilsit was built on foundations of sand: it was intensely unpopular in Russia, consequently, during the fighting between France and Austria in 1809, Russia, although she was pledged to aid France, remained lukewarm. Napoleon took his revenge after he had defeated the Austrians. Under the terms of the Franco-Austrian Peace Treaty of October 14, 1809, Austrian Poland, without consulting Russia (which in accordance with the Tilsit Treaty Napoleon pledged himself to do) was ceded to

¹ p. 920.

the Grand Duchy of Warsaw. Napoleon's aim was to strengthen the Grand Duchy as a challenge to Russia. The latter was not willing to play second fiddle to France, and the Tsar now realized that the Peace of Tilsit had been a dangerous mistake; both sides began to speed up preparations for war.

Napoleon again played on the hostility of the Poles to Russia and made promises that he would restore Poland to her 1772 frontiers and full independence, and in fact he spoke of his coming war with Russia as a war, in effect, for the liberation of Poland. The Poles believed in the sincerity of these promises and her nobility, in particular, flocked to his banner. At the same time, in February 1812, Napoleon had concluded an agreement with Prussia, and in March 1812 with Austria, whereby both these countries agreed to furnish him with troops and food for his campaign against Russia.

In April 1812 Alexander called on Napoleon, in accordance with the Treaty of Tilsit, to evacuate Prussia, but Napoleon refused. Two months later Napoleon, without declaring war, crossed the Niemen, and his famous and fatal march on Moscow had commenced. It is outside our province to treat of the capture of Moscow and the ghastly winter retreat, only to quote the words of the British historian, H. A. L. Fisher: "Napoleon's Russian adventure, more than the Peninsular War of the British Navy, brought the French Empire in ruins to the ground."

Napoleon crossed the Niemen in June 1812 with an army 600,000 strong, but in his disastrous retreat, when he reached Vilna, it had dwindled to a mob of 15,000 to 20,000 hungry, exhausted and ragged men. Napoleon's attack on Russia was fatal; it paved the way to Waterloo and St. Helena.

When the victorious Powers met at Vienna in 1814, the question of Poland was the centre of the keenest controversy. The Tsar pressed for the inclusion of all Poland within the Russian Empire. This conflicted with the interests of Prussia and of Austria; it was also opposed by Great Britain because it would tend to make Russia too strong and thus upset the political equilibrium of Europe. However, after much argument and several crises nearly leading to war, almost the whole of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw was ceded to Russia under the name of the "Kingdom of Poland." Posen was handed over to Prussia, and Galicia to Austria. Cracow, with a population of 61,000, was constituted a tiny Free State; Poland ceased to exist as an independent and sovereign State for over a century.

Chapter VIII

FROM THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA TO THE FIRST WORLD WAR

AS A FINAL ACT, the Congress of Vienna in 1815 stipulated that Russia, Prussia and Austria should grant the Poles within their respective jurisdiction such forms of state organization as would preserve the national existence of the Poles, their traditions, religion, culture, etc.

Tsar Alexander I, who was then playing with constitutional ideas and desired to appear before Europe as very liberal-minded, applied the stipulation in what was then generally regarded as a fairly generous manner. His "Kingdom of Poland" (it continued to be designated popularly as the "Grand Duchy of Warsaw") was not incorporated in the Russian Empire. It was organized into a separate State with its own legislature, army and currency, but with the Tsar as King of Poland. The question of peace or war was the exclusive prerogative of the Russian Empire. The Diet met in 1818, 1820 and 1825 and was on each occasion opened by Tsar Alexander.

The Diet—both the Senate (appointed by the Tsar) and the elected Chamber of Deputies—was in the hands of the Szlachta, rich merchants and industrialists. The property-less, i.e. the peasants and townworkers, had no representation or political rights of any kind. This, of course, had the inevitable results: "The nobles who dominated the Diet," states the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "did nothing to remove the most crying evil of the country—the miserable state of the peasants, who had been freed from personal serfdom in 1807 [by Napoleon] but were being steadily driven from their holdings by the landlords. In spite of the general prosperity of the country due to peace, and the execution of public works mostly at the expense of Russia, the state of the agricultural class grew, if anything, worse."¹

The Diet had no time to consider social reforms, the nobility being exclusively exercised with the demand for the extension of the frontiers of the Kingdom of Poland to those of 1772, i.e. the incorporation into the administrative area of the Kingdom of land which had once belonged to Poland but was ethnographically non-Polish—Ukraine, Byelorussia and Lithuania, the population of which, as we have shown above, was bitterly against Polish domination.

¹ pp. 920-1.

On the other hand, Alexander I soon got tired of his so-called liberalism both at home and in Poland. He violated the Polish Constitution time and again and made open threats to use force if necessary when any deputy permitted himself the privilege of criticizing the way the Constitution was being or was not being carried out.

In general, the Tsar and his advisers and officials established a very reactionary social and political regime. Educational facilities were reduced to a minimum, the censorship of books and journals was of the strictest, and a wide spying system was instituted. One effect of all this, as well as of the rising revolutionary movements in Europe, was the rise of a number of secret societies, the aim of which was the establishment of the political independence of Poland and a more liberal regime.

The latter aim was pursued also by the more progressive and revolutionary sections in Russia itself. The struggle for Polish liberation not alone from the Tsarist yoke but also from that of Prussia and Austria, with whom Russia had formed a Holy Alliance, had in the conditions of that time a leavening effect on the then revolutionary movements and struggles of Europe in general and of Russia in particular, and Polish secret societies were in touch with the Russian Decembrists.

However, the Tsardom crushed the Decembrist rising of December 14, 1825, as well as the Polish Patriots who had connections therewith. This, of course, did not destroy the revolutionary movement either in Russia or Poland, but only drove it deeper underground.

At the same time it will be well to remember that whilst a section of the Polish revolutionary movement were real patriots, many of them Republican and many who really hoped to establish an independent free democratic Poland, there were others—the landed nobility and the rich merchants and manufacturers—who did not desire a revolutionary struggle against the Tsar. On the contrary, they hoped to come to an agreement with him whereby Poland would remain united to Russia under the Tsar, but the latter would agree to the reunion of Lithuania, Ukraine and Byelorussia with Poland, thus guaranteeing the Polish landowners the possibility of increasing their exploitation of the peoples of these three countries. The Polish big bourgeoisie on their part required the Russian market for their goods and did not want to antagonize the Tsar and his Government. There were, of course, other tendencies in between these

two main groups of what we may call the Patriotic Revolutionary Republicans on the one hand and the Conciliators on the other.

On May 28, 1830, the fourth and last session of the Diet was opened by Tsar Nicholas I, who had succeeded to the throne in 1825. Nicholas I disappointed the nobility and others by not referring in his opening speech to the union of the Lithuanian, Ukrainian and Byelorussian territories to Poland. On the other hand, the opposition bitterly attacked the Government for its reactionary educational policy and made a number of demands for political and other reforms which, needless to say, were not granted by Nicholas I.

However, the bourgeois revolutionary movements in Europe of 1830 following the overthrow of the Bourbons in France, July 1830, and the declaration of Belgian independence in August of the same year, made a great impression on Poland, and when it was learnt that Nicholas I was preparing to send both Russian and Polish troops via Poland for the purpose of restoring the Bourbons to the French throne, a military revolt supported by the conspirative students, workers and other societies broke out in Warsaw on November 29, 1830. Undoubtedly a wave of patriotic ardour swept the Polish urban areas, the insurrection started with a small but well-disciplined and adequately equipped army and had a number of successes, the Grand Duke Constantine, the Imperial Lieutenant of Poland, being forced to flee from Warsaw.

"The extraordinary weakness of the Grand Duke," states the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "allowed the rising to gather strength. He evacuated Warsaw and finally left the country, dying at Vitebsk on June 27, 1831. The war lasted from January till September 1831. The fact that the Poles possessed a well-drilled army of 23,800 foot, 6,800 horse and 108 guns, which they were able to recruit to a total strength of 80,821 men with 158 guns, gave solidity to the rising."¹

The flight of Constantine was followed by the organization of a Provisional Government, General Khlopitsky being appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Army. Khlopitsky was convinced that victory lay with the big battalions; he had little faith in the success of his own army against the Russians; on the other hand, he definitely feared the spread of the revolutionary movement of the people. Accordingly his first aim was to crush all revolutionary

¹ p. 921.

ferment at home and then to strive to come to an understanding with the Russian Tsar.

Actively or tacitly supported by the majority of the Provisional Government, who stood for "law and order" above all things, Khlopitsky proclaimed himself dictator in December 1830. The revolutionary elements, with Lelevel at their head, strongly opposed Khlopitsky, but they were not strong enough to do much against him or to impose their own policy.

Khlopitsky adopted a series of repressive measures, making many arrests among the real patriots and revolutionaries, and proceeded to enter into negotiations for the preservation of the Constitution of 1815 with Nicholas I, whom he assured that "the Polish nation is far from any desire to disrupt the ties which bind it to your August will." But Nicholas proved obdurate, treated the Polish delegation with contempt, refused to have dealing with "his mutinous subjects" and prepared for armed action. Under these circumstances the Diet, on December 20, 1830, declared the Polish rising to be a "national rising" and issued a manifesto enumerating in detail the unlawful acts of the Tsars in Poland since 1815.

On January 25, 1831, the Diet "dethroned" Nicholas I and proclaimed that "the Polish nation as represented by the Diet, declares that it is independent and that it has the right to confer the Crown on one who will be more worthy of it."

On the same day the Patriotic Club held a huge demonstration in Warsaw in honour of the Russian Decembrists, at which revolutionary speeches were hailed enthusiastically by huge crowds of the common people. The Greeko-Uniat Church held a funeral service for the five Decembrists who had been hanged by Nicholas I.

But the Diet failed to do the one thing which might have secured the success of the Polish struggle for independence, e.g. the solution of the agrarian question—the liberation of the peasants from serfdom, poverty and starvation. The Left elements of the Patriotic Club demanded this, pointing out that only by such a policy could the peasants be interested in the national struggle for independence. In general, the plan proposed by Lelevel and his supporters was for the transformation of Poland into a democracy, the freeing of the serfs and the granting of equality of rights to the Jews. They also hoped that the Polish war for an independent, democratic Poland would fuse with the revolutionary struggles in Europe for freedom and democracy. But this was the last thing desired by the reactionary Diet, which

was as obdurate against granting any real reforms as was Nicholas I against granting the demands made on him by the Polish Diet.

The Polish insurgents demanded, as we have already stated, not only the independence of Poland but also the "restoration" to Poland of territories taken from Russia in previous centuries, including Lithuania—they demanded the frontiers of 1772.

Serious operations were begun against the Poles in January 1831, and although the Poles fought well and courageously and even gained some minor victories, by September 1831 the insurrection was completely crushed. The Poles had appealed to Europe for assistance, but their appeal was disregarded.

Some European Ministers expressed sympathy with the Poles. Britain and France indeed made a mild protest to Nicholas I on behalf of the Poles, but that was all the help they gave. There were many expressions of sympathy in the French, Belgian and British Press, but the bankers of these countries refused to give loans to the insurgents. As for Prussia and Austria, afraid of the effect a successful rising in Russian Poland might have on their annexed Polish territories, they, particularly Prussia, helped the Tsardom against the Poles in every possible way.

The Polish rising of 1830-1 failed, but it undoubtedly had an important effect on the European revolutionary movements for, amongst other things, as Marx pointed out at the meeting commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the rising, it had constituted an effective obstacle to the plan of the Russian Tsar and the Prussian King to intervene in France with the object of restoring the Bourbons to the French throne.

After the revolt had been quelled, Nicholas I decided to put an end to the Polish Constitution of 1815; accordingly the Constitutional Charter was withdrawn, the Legislature abrogated, the separate army disbanded, the Polish currency system abolished, the territories of the Kingdom of Poland were incorporated in the Russian Empire and the ceremony of the enthronement of the Tsar as King of Poland was abolished.

The new Statute in which these rules were laid down granted freedom of religion and maintained the use of the Polish language in law courts and schools. Whilst abolishing the Diet it provided for local urban, municipal self-government. But this Statute was honoured by the Tsar more in the breach than the observance and actually the policy pursued by Nicholas I in Poland was as reactionary and repressive

as in every other part of his domain. In 1835 he told the Poles that the very idea of an independent Poland was a "chimera," and he acted accordingly.

The tiny State of Cracow, referred to on a previous page, was regarded by Russia, Prussia and Austria as a centre of disturbance, and in 1846 the three great States agreed to its suppression, and following on some disturbances in Galicia, more agrarian than political, it was occupied by Austrian forces in November 1846.

Large numbers of the participants of the 1830-1 rising emigrated, chiefly to France. There were two main sections of *émigrés*: (1) The aristocratic, mainly the rich nobility under the leadership of Prince Adam Czartoryscy, with headquarters in Paris. Their aim was to restore the Polish monarchy and the Constitution of May 1791, they were opposed to any fundamental agrarian reform in Poland and to any national revolution; for the attainment of their views they relied mainly on obtaining by diplomatic action the support and intervention of foreign States—particularly Britain and France—against Russia; (2) The democratic *émigré* group which formed the Polish Democratic Society with, amongst others, Lelevel and Mieroslawsky at its head. Its centre was at first in Paris and later in London. Their aim was the organization of a free, independent, democratic Poland and the solution of the agrarian question by the liberation of the peasants from landlord aggression and the granting to them of a sufficiency of land. They stood for and endeavoured to organize a national revolution in Poland and appealed for help not to foreign governments but to the peoples.

This group had considerable support from some of the most noted Polish *littérateurs* and the urban intelligentsia generally, the students, and a section of the nobility.

The Crimean War (1853-5), the death of Nicholas I (1855), and the revolutionary ferment in Russia itself all greatly stimulated the national liberation movement in Poland. Alexander II (1855-81), like Alexander I, at first played the Liberal both at home and in Poland, and although he warned the Poles against "vain dreams," he nevertheless made certain minor concessions, but they were, of course, insufficient to satisfy the demands of the Polish masses.

In October 1861 there were a number of serious popular demonstrations in Poland, followed by brutal repressions. This was followed by the formation of a Central Revolutionary Committee which headed the Republican parties or so-called "Reds." The latter started

immediate preparation for an armed rising; the "Reds" stood for the abolition of landlord oppression and the transfer to the peasants of the plots of land they had been tilling for themselves, the owners (big landlords) to receive compensation from the State. On the other hand, the peasants were clamouring for the division amongst themselves of the whole of the big estates. On the political field the "Reds" demanded the 1772 frontiers for Poland. As opposed to the "Reds" there was the party of the big landowners—the "Whites"; like the "Reds" they demanded the 1772 frontiers, but they were in essence opposed to an armed rising.

After a series of repressions by the Russian authorities and attempts on the life of high-placed Government officials by Polish revolutionaries, the endeavour of the Government to carry out an unpopular recruiting levy was the spark which started a new conflagration.

On January 22, 1863, the revolutionary committee issued a decree declaring "the whole country in a state of insurrection" against Russia. The decree further proclaimed all Poles, irrespective of religion or origin, as free equal citizens, it abolished the still existing forms of serfdom and gave the peasants the plots of land which they had hitherto tilled for their own use.

The insurrection actually started in the night of January 23, 1863, by the simultaneous attack of the revolutionaries against the Russian garrisons in fifteen different parts of Poland. All sorts and conditions of Poles participated in the rising, but the leading role was played by the revolutionary section of the lower nobility.

The "Whites," although against the revolt in principle and afraid of its repercussions on the interests of the big landowners, were nevertheless powerless to stop it and decided to adhere to it in order to give it the direction they desired. The adherence of the "Whites" undoubtedly meant the strengthening of the rising on the material side, but it lost thereby much of its revolutionary content.

On May 22, 1863, a National Government was formed which confirmed the January Decree.

The Poles were poorly armed, and although they fought well, the whole fighting was more in the nature of guerilla warfare by the Poles. The chief weakness of the movement was the passivity of the peasants in the many districts in which the January decree (regarding the land) had not been applied as a result of the opposition of the Polish Pans (landlords).

The Poles, as we have stated before, demanded the inclusion in

Poland of Lithuania and parts of Ukraine and Byelorussia, and the Polish landlords in these regions joined the insurrection, but in so far as the peasants in those regions also revolted it was not for the union of these territories with Poland, but for agrarian reform and against the local landowners, particularly the Polish Pans.

As in 1830 the Poles appealed for aid to western Europe, but all they obtained was copious sympathy, little if any help. Prussia feared the reaction of the rising on its own Polish territory, accordingly Bismarck advised the Tsar to suppress the rising with the sword and to grant no concessions; finally Russia and Prussia signed a convention directed against the Polish insurgents.

Austria on the other hand, whilst glad to see Russia weakened, was also averse to an independent Poland and desired an end to the conflict as speedily as possible. The other Powers too—each for her own reasons—desired an end to the Russo-Polish conflict, and on April 22, 1863, Britain, France and Austria sent diplomatic notes to Russia urging the adoption of measures to put an end to the bloodshed in Poland. Italy, Spain, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Portugal, Turkey and the Pope subsequently adhered to this protest.

Under these circumstances and in view of the fact that the insurgents had had some success, Alexander II issued a manifesto on April 25, 1863, in which he promised an amnesty to all who would lay down their arms by May 1st. At the same time, Gorchakov, the Russian Foreign Minister, gave an evasive reply to the Western Powers, asking for their suggestions.

On June 29, 1863, Britain, France and Austria sent another note demanding complete amnesty for the Poles, the re-establishment of the 1815 Constitution, full liberty of conscience, use of the Polish language in schools, court and administration, etc., and suggested the cessation of the conflict and the summoning of a conference. But in the meantime the Tsarist army was getting the better of the insurgents, and to this message the Russian Minister Gorchakov retorted that the issue with the Poles was an internal Russian question and he hotly protested against "interference in Russia's internal affairs." The protests evoked much warm support, especially among liberal-minded people abroad; the Governments, however, were not only not prepared to follow up words by deeds, but they now even dropped all joint diplomatic action and took up a neutral position.

The revolt was finally crushed with cruel severity and "order restored" in the following year—1864.

It remains to be added that large sections of Russian revolutionaries, conspirative societies, some revolutionary publicists—such as Herzen and some of his followers—warmly supported the Polish rising; they appealed to the Russian soldiers and officers to turn their weapons against the Tsarist despotism and there were indeed Russian officers who responded to these appeals and lost their lives fighting for Poland.

"The insurrection of 1863," wrote Roman Dyboski, "the last armed revolution in nineteenth-century Poland, broke out and ended in new disaster. Like the insurrection of 1831, it is a tragic landmark in the history of Poland."¹

It is a very significant fact, freely admitted by Poles themselves, that neither the revolts of 1830-1 nor 1863-4 attracted to their support the most numerous class in Poland, the peasants. "Like the insurrection of 1831, that of 1863 had one chance of success: the appeal to the peasant masses," wrote Roman Dyboski. "The originators of the movement realized this, and in their very first manifesto announced the unconditional enfranchisement of the peasants and the unreserved transfer of the land tilled by them into their ownership, with compensation to the landlords out of national funds. But the insurrectionary Government did not have the power to enforce such a sweeping change: landlords largely failed to comply, and peasants even more largely remained ignorantly apathetic. They darkly remembered the disappointments of former generations. The insurrection of 1831 had been predominantly an insurrection of the gentry. That of 1863 was indeed much more democratic, many of its noblest soldiers and leaders coming from the middle class of the towns. But neither the first nor the second insurrection succeeded in reaching that bed-rock of Polish national strength—the peasant class. The peasants merely began to warm to the cause as the insurrection went on, and attempts at insurrectionary conscription in the villages had some success in the later stages. But on the whole the appeal to the peasant in 1863 was a failure. The Polish peasant had received his freedom under Prussia from the Prussian King in 1823; under Austria from the Austrian Emperor in 1848; he ultimately received it under Russia from the Tsar in 1864, when the Polish insurrectionary Government was in its death-throes."²

After the final liquidation of the revolt in 1864, the Polish problem disappeared from the field of European diplomacy as a living question and the Russian Government made an even more determined effort than before to Russianize Poland and Lithuania.

¹ *Outlines of Polish History*, p. 190.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 198-9.

The last quarter of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century saw the development of capitalism in Russia generally and in Poland in particular—not indeed so rapidly as in western Europe but still on a sufficient scale to give birth to a comparatively numerous industrial working class with its own political and economic aims, its own psychology—henceforth what was best in the progressive working-class movement in Poland fought side by side with the Russian workers against their common oppressors, the Tsarist autocracy and capitalist exploitation. Of course, there were differences of views in the Russian and Polish socialist movements—some in the latter undoubtedly laid too much stress under the given circumstances to Polish separatism, but in the main the struggle was a common one against the common enemy.

Russia's expansionist policy in the 19th century gained additional territory in the Caucasus, in Turkistan and in the Amur province. In the Caucasus she confronted the decaying Ottoman Empire and Persia. Her conquest of Turkistan brought her to the borders of Persia, Afghanistan and British India. Fears for India continually poisoned British relations with Russia, but in 1907 the two countries agreed to separate spheres of influence in Persia.

During the decade 1861-1901, the strategic single track Trans-Siberian railway was constructed to Vladivostok. This led to increased economic development and settlement of Western Siberia. In the Far East, while exploiting the weakness of China, the Russians came

into conflict with the interests of the rising power of Japan. Russia obtained railway building concessions in Manchuria, a lease of Port Arthur in 1896, and later occupied Manchuria. After the Russo-Japanese War 1904-5 she was compelled to cede Port Arthur, her interest in the South Manchuria Railway, and Karafuto to Japan.

In the 1914-18 War Russia and Japan were allies but, after the Russian Revolution of 1917, that did not prevent Japan from occupying a considerable area of Russian territory in the Far East. Though she returned in 1922 from Vladivostok and eastern Siberia, this occupation is instructive concerning Japanese aims. Tension between Russia and Japan has continued ever since and was not allayed even in 1935, when the Soviet Union sold to her the Chinese Eastern Railway in Manchuria.

640 miles = 1 inch
200 0 200 400 600 800 1000



RUSSIAN EXPANSION IN THE 19th CENTURY TO 1914

Chapter IX

THE FIRST WORLD WAR AND POLAND

BETWEEN THE DATES of the final suppression of the Polish revolt 1863-4 and the outbreak of the World War in 1914, one marked change had taken place in Russian Poland: it had become, as we mentioned in the last chapter, considerably industrialized, and Polish manufacturers and merchants found an extensive and growing market in the Russian Empire, especially in textiles and coal. This development had been aided by the abolition of the customs barrier in 1851.

At the outbreak of the first World War, Poles were automatically enrolled, on the one hand in the armies of Russia, on the other in the forces of Germany and Austria, i.e. were mobilized in opposing armies. In addition the Legions organized by Joseph Pilsudski—who later became Dictator of Poland—fought with the Austrian Forces, while Polish Legions organized in France fought on the western front against the Central Powers.

Not only sharp differences, but diametrically opposed views were held by different sections of Poles as to what they should aim at. Broadly speaking, those who had lived under Russian rule advocated a united Poland federated with Russia under a liberal constitution, while those who had lived under Austria urged a united Poland federated with Austria and also with a liberal constitution.

Both Russia and Austria, as one would expect in such a life and death struggle, wooed the Poles. Germany, however, made no offer of concessions.

The Grand Duke Michael, the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Armies, promised the Poles united nationhood, with self-government under Russian rule. The promise was well received by Russian Poles and the Russian war effort was, in general, not hindered in Poland.

On November 5, 1916, at a time when the armies of the Central Powers were in occupation of Warsaw, the German and Austrian Governments promised a resurrected Poland, but limited to the provinces of Russian Poland, federated to themselves.

As to the attitude of Great Britain, and for that matter that of her Allies, it was well summed up by Mr. Frederick Harrison, the well-known writer and publicist.¹ "While the liberation of Belgium and

¹ Died 1921.

northern France," said Harrison, "is absolutely necessary, it would be absurd to rebuild the ancient Kingdom of Poland. The only practical solution of the Polish question is a local autonomy under the care of Russia and guaranteed by the Allies."

That was, and that remained, the attitude of the Allies until after the March (1917) Revolution. The Russian Provisional Government promised the Poles independence, but with certain reservations. After the November (1917) Revolution, the Government of the Allies felt themselves much less restrained in their references to Poland, and one of President Wilson's famous fourteen points read:

An independent Polish State should be erected, which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant.

Clause XII of the Armistice terms of November 11, 1918, stated:

All German troops at present in any territory which before the war formed part of Austria-Hungary, Roumania or Turkey, shall withdraw within the frontiers of Germany as they existed on 1st August, 1914, and all German troops at present in territories, which before the war formed part of Russia, must likewise return to within the frontiers of Germany as above defined, as soon as the Allies shall think the moment suitable, having regard to the internal situation of these territories.

As the German troops withdrew to the Fatherland, they gave up their arms to the Poles.

Article XVI read:

The Allies shall have free access to the territories evacuated by the Germans on their Eastern frontier, either through Danzig or by the Vistula, in order to convey supplies to the population of these territories or for the purpose of maintaining order.

This Article was, of course, intended not only to "convey" foodstuffs, but also to "convey" supplies of armaments, etc.

Article XXV said:

Freedom of access to and from the Baltic to be given to the Navies and Mercantile Marines of the Allied and Associated Powers. This to be secured by the occupation of all German forts, fortifications, batteries and defence works of all kinds in all the routes from the Cattegat into the Baltic, and by

the sweeping up and destruction of all mines and obstructions within and without German territorial waters without any questions of neutrality being raised by Germany, and the positions of all such mines and obstructions to be indicated, and the plans relating thereto are to be supplied.

And finally Article XXIX declared:

All Black Sea ports are to be evacuated by Germany; all Russian warships of all descriptions seized by Germany in the Black Sea are to be handed over to the Allies and the United States of America; all neutral merchant ships seized in the Black Sea are to be released; all warlike and other materials of all kinds seized in those ports are to be returned, and German materials as specified in Clause XXVIII are to be abandoned.

In other words, these articles were designed to supply the Allies with *place d'armes* for attacks on Soviet Russia and to aid the counter-revolutionaries and the Poles.

The independence of Poland was formally declared on November 11, 1918, and a Provisional Coalition Government came into existence with Moraczewski as President of the Council and Pilsudski as Commander of the Army.

At that time, to quote the words of the then Lord President of the Council, Lord Curzon, "there was nothing necessary to public or private life of which Poland was not in most urgent need." Above all, Poland required peace with her great eastern neighbour, Russia.

As far as the Soviet Government was concerned, there were no difficulties. It had recognized Polish independence without any qualifications, and would have been quite willing to give Poland a frontier in accordance with President Wilson's declaration.

However, there were forces both inside and outside of Poland which were not satisfied with an eastern frontier for Poland, limited by ethnographical principles, and, quite apart from that consideration, did not want peace between Warsaw and Moscow. As early as November 19, 1918, Pilsudski ordered the capture of Lvov, an admittedly ancient Ukrainian town.

Marshal Pilsudski, by general admission to-day, was a romanticist. His aim was not the re-establishment of the Polish State within its ethnographical frontiers (as stipulated by President Wilson and accepted by the Allied Governments), but the re-establishment of the Polish Empire with its 1772 frontiers; frontiers which would have encircled more non-Poles than there were Poles in ethnographical Poland. Great Britain was not enamoured of this idea; diplomatic representatives in Paris of the Denikin-Koltchak Government were emphatically opposed

to it, but the French favoured it. The Paris Press of December 1918 was declaring that a powerful Poland was a French necessity.

Within Poland itself some warning voices were raised, but even these voices were demanding some, although a more limited, extension eastwards beyond Poland's racial frontiers.

As already mentioned, the terms of peace laid down and the principles enunciated by President Wilson, and which were accepted by all the belligerent Powers, stipulated for the inclusion in Poland of all territories "inhabited by indisputably Polish populations."

When the representatives of the Allied Governments met in Paris in the early spring of 1919 to draft the Peace Treaties, the question of Poland's frontiers found an early place on the Agenda. Russia as a State was vitally interested in the subject of her future frontiers with Poland, but from first to last she was never consulted in the detailed delimitation of Poland's eastern frontier.

Mr. Constantin Nabokoff, the representative of the "Kolchak Government" in London up till September 1919, in his book *The Ordeal of a Diplomat*, after enumerating the Russian "White" representatives in Paris during the Peace Conference, added: "None of these gentlemen were invited to the Peace Conference."

Despite the efforts of Mr. Lloyd George and President Wilson the Soviet representatives were also excluded. The Poles, therefore, had a clear field to themselves.

The representatives of the Allied Governments were well aware that once the Civil War in Russia was over the Government which emerged would not permanently accept any delimitation of Russia's western frontiers, unless her representatives had been fully consulted.

The Allied Governments in their despatch to Admiral Kolchak, May 26, 1919, at a time when the Allies expected that Kolchak would be victorious, asked whether when the foreshadowed Constituent Assembly was summoned in Russia, it would recognize the independence of Poland and whether "in event of the frontiers and other relations between Russia and these countries (Poland and Finland) not being settled by agreement, they will be referred to the arbitration of the League of Nations."

Admiral Kolchak, in his reply dated June 4, 1919, stated that his "Government" was willing to recognize the independence of Poland, but he added: "The final solution of the question of delimiting the frontiers between Russia and Poland must . . . be postponed till the meeting of the Constituent Assembly."

This reply, in which Kolchak refused to pledge himself to a delimitation of the frontiers without previous consultation with a Russian Constituent Assembly, was regarded as acceptable by the Allied Governments.

The sequel is well known. Kolchak and all the other Russian "Whites" were defeated. And the representatives of the Soviet Government were never consulted.

In *A History of the Peace Conference in Paris*, Vol. VI, an authoritative work edited by H. M. V. Temperley, it is stated:

With the Bolsheviks the Conference had no official dealings, while the other Russian representatives had behind them only portions of the former Russian Empire, and, being unrecognised, were unable to put forward authoritative claims. As a consequence, the case of the Russians was inadequately expressed and imperfectly appreciated. Their general position was that they accepted the independence of Poland within her ethnographic limits, but disputed all claims to territory further east.¹

Even the Germans were given a fairer deal at the Peace Conference than the Russians. To quote Temperley again:

The Germans, on the other hand, could speak with the authority of their Government behind them, and although they were without power to affect the decision, their protests were followed by a certain number of concessions. They disputed the justice of the settlement in all respects, but accepted the cession of, at any rate, parts of Posnania, while protesting hotly against the proposals in regard to Danzig, West Prussia and Upper Silesia.²

The Polish representatives in Paris were not content with the Wilson declaration; they wanted to include in the new Polish State peoples who were not only not Poles, but who were bitterly hostile to Polish domination, i.e. Germans, Byelorussians and Ukrainians. Lloyd George and General Smuts vehemently opposed these pretensions on the ground that they would be flagrantly unjust and a serious cause of unrest in Europe, leading in all probability to new wars.

Winston Churchill, in his book *The World Crisis and the Aftermath*, quoted from Lloyd George's "famous memorandum of March 25, 1919, in the course of which the latter, among other things, stated that it would be fatal to place other nations under Poland, a country which has never proved its capacity for stable self-government throughout its history."³

¹ p. 237.

² Ibid.

³ p. 194.

General Smuts vigorously opposed the French proposals to extend Poland's eastern frontiers to include Byelorussians and Ukrainians. Lloyd George, in his *Truth About the Peace Treaties*, stated, quoting from a declaration by General Smuts:

He (General Smuts) was glad to know that it was generally agreed that the Eastern provisions must be modified. Poland was an historic failure, and always would be a failure, and in this Treaty we were trying to reverse the verdict of history. He asked that the Allies should hesitate before guaranteeing frontiers for Poland such as were now proposed.¹

Finally, after much discussion, the Supreme Council of the Allied Governments adopted a Declaration (see Appendix No. 3) delimiting Poland's eastern frontier, which later became known as the "Curzon Line."

This decision was taken only after the fullest investigation. On this subject Temperley stated: "It must be strongly emphasized that only after the fullest discussion of the principles involved in each case did the Conference arrive at its final decisions."²

This frontier applied the principle advocated by President Wilson and allotted to Poland all the territories which were ethnographically Polish. But the Polish Government of that day wanted a frontier line in the east far beyond ethnographical Poland. In this connection Temperley said: "In the east their [Poland's] demands were varying and obscure. They gave up the strictly ethnographic principle, and demanded not only Eastern Galicia but at least some portion of White Russia and the Ukraine, on grounds of defence or economics or history or culture".³

Almost from the very day on which the independence of Poland was declared, her Government cast covetous eyes on the province of East Galicia, inhabited overwhelmingly by Ukrainians—the Poles there did not exceed at the outside 20 per cent of the population; indeed, the Ukrainians there for centuries had regarded the Poles as their historic enemies.

The Polish Government's desire to possess East Galicia is, from an imperialist point of view, easily understandable. Paderewski wrote: "The natural resources of the province are great. In its western section are rich coal fields and salt mines, and in the eastern are oil fields and deposits of potassium salts."

Further, many of the wealthiest landlords in East Galicia were

¹ p. 693.

² *A History of the Peace Conference in Paris*, p. 236.

³ *Ibid.*

Poles. The area of the province is 50,000 square kilometres, and it had a population of between 4,000,000 and 5,000,000 souls.

The "Ukrainian Government" under Petlura regarded East Galicia (rightly on racial principles) as part of the Ukraine, and his best—in fact his only—reliable troops were drawn from that province.

War broke out between Pilsudski and Petlura in the spring of 1919 for the possession of East Galicia. It is true that in these months the Polish troops were insufficiently trained and ill-equipped, but the Ukrainian troops were in a still worse plight.

The representatives of the Allied Governments in Paris declined to approve a Polish annexation of the province, and the representatives of Kolchak and Denikin in the French capital were absolutely adamant against any such annexation. It was common ground that if the "Whites" were successful in the civil war they would never recognize the secession of East Galicia to Poland.

The Polish troops drove the Petlura forces out of Lemberg (Lvov), the capital of the province, on January 10, 1919, and occupied the city, and on February 20, 1919, an Allied Mission effected an armistice between the two sides, the terms of which specified the River Bug as the armistice line and the placing of the oil wells in Polish control under Allied supervision. However, fighting soon broke out again between the two sides with alternating success, and the Allied Governments continued their efforts at mediation.

Paderewski returned to Warsaw from the Peace Conference in the first week of May 1919, with instructions to effect an armistice with the Ukrainian forces in East Galicia, but he met with an emphatic refusal on the part of the Diet, since by this date the Polish forces, being better equipped than Petlura's, the Polish Government and High Command were convinced of their ability to drive the Ukrainian troops out of the province.

Paderewski at first temporized, but finally, despite his pledge to the Allies in Paris, yielded to the clamour in the Diet.

By May 24, 1919, the whole of East Galicia was in the hands of the Polish forces. Fighting continued during the next two months with alternating success, but by July 18, 1919, the Poles were able to claim that they were in effective control of East Galicia up to the River Zbrucz, which gave them the natural frontier they wanted and enabled them to defend the province with a very small force against an attack from the east.

The Peace Conference was still very reluctant to allot East Galicia

to Poland, and the "White" Generals who were still striving for "Russia one and indivisible" refused even to discuss the acceptance of the *fait accompli*. Finally, towards the end of November 1919, the Allies offered Poland a Protectorate over East Galicia for twenty-five years, but the Polish Government refused this provisional solution.

Henceforth, to quote the words of Count Alexander Skrzynski, Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs 1922-3 and in 1924, "the problem in fact, if not in theory, ceased to appear in international affairs."

So much for Poland's annexation of East Galicia, which gave her another advantage in pursuing her anti-Soviet policy, i.e. a common frontier with Rumania.

As already mentioned, Poland could have had peace with Soviet Russia immediately after she had declared her independence, had her government so wished. On January 29, 1919, and again immediately after the Polish elections early in February 1919, the Soviet Government wirelessly the Polish Foreign Minister, offering to enter into negotiations; not only were these communications left unanswered, but some days later, after the second message had reached Warsaw, Paderewski, addressing the Diet, declared to the accompaniment of cheers: "Poland demands a strong army to fight Bolshevism."

At this time two different conceptions of foreign policy were being vehemently discussed in Poland. Count Alexander Skrzynski outlines these conceptions thus:

The first one was relatively modest in territorial claims, conservative in practice, and founded on the principle that Poland must endeavour to keep on good terms with Russia, whatever form of government that State might adopt. According to this theory Poland must not advance too far eastward and must not allow any elementary cause of political or national friction to arise between herself and Russia. The other theory, reverting in a way to the ancient traditions of Poland, very audacious, but slightly romantic, aimed at the break-up of Russia into her national components, limiting her to a purely great Russian ethnographical territory and surrounding her with a chain of States more or less independent, from Ukraina in the south, to the Lithuanian and White-Russian State in the North.¹

The second conception was called the "federalist conception," it was advocated by part of the nobility and wealthy landlords who wanted to recover their properties situated in territories embraced by the federalist programme. Throughout 1919 and in the early months

¹ *Poland and Peace*, pp. 36-7.

of 1920, the "federalist conception" dominated the foreign policy of Poland, with the result that, to quote Count Skrzyński again: "When on January 29, 1920, the Soviet Government proposed to Poland the beginning of peace negotiations, sentiment for federalistic theory was at its height. The proposals for peace were not given any serious consideration."¹

The policy of the Red Army High Command at this time was to deal first with the Russian "White" Forces and consequently the Polish-Russian frontier was very thinly held on the Russian side. The Poles steadily pushed their line eastwards; they occupied Pinsk on March 8, 1919, Vilna on April 19, 1919, Minsk on August 22, 1919, and on the same day Polish troops stood 40 miles east of Rovno; on August 28, 1919, they occupied Polotsk, and by the end of September 1919, their centre had penetrated into Russian territory as far east as Bobruisk and their left wing as far east as Olevsk. In brief, by the end of September 1919, the Polish front had been advanced into Russian territory well beyond the racial frontiers of Poland.

Broadly speaking, by the end of 1919, the Polish troops stood on a front 250 miles east of the Curzon Line. Pilsudski was at this period biding his time. He no doubt calculated that the Soviet Government would be victorious in the civil war, but that afterwards its forces would be so exhausted that the Polish army, equipped by the Allied Governments, would be able to carry the Polish flag east to the Polish Imperial frontiers of 1772.

Patek, the then Polish Foreign Minister, spent January 1920 in Western Europe, urging greater allied aid for his country. The *Daily Telegraph*, January 31, 1920, in a leading article referring to Patek's mission and defending the invasion of Russian territory by Polish forces, regretfully concluded: "M. Patek, we believe, has left Paris and London without having obtained anything more specific than a general assurance that the Allies would not allow Poland to be crushed."

Whatever the precise terms of that assurance were, the Polish Government appeared to be very satisfied with them because another note from Moscow offering to discuss peace, and in the course of which the Soviet Government declared "that in so far as the real interests of Poland and Russia are concerned there is no territorial, economic or other question which cannot be solved in a peaceful manner" was left for the time being unanswered. On February 13, 1920 (within a fortnight of Patek's return to Warsaw), *The Times* correspondent in

¹ *Poland and Peace*, p. 40.

that city cabled "the movement against making peace immediately with Soviet Russia is gathering strength."

Whilst negotiations were in progress between Warsaw and Paris and London, the Polish-Russian front had not remained quiescent.

The Red Army was still following up its successes against the "White" Forces in various parts of Russia; but this meant that the Russo-Polish frontier had been denuded of Soviet troops and the armed forces of Poland seized this advantage. They occupied Proskurov and Starokonstantinov (south-western Ukraine) on January 5th, and Mozyr (over 300 miles east of their racial frontier) on March 6, 1920. The capture of Mozyr enormously strengthened the hands of the pro-war party in Poland. Four days later, March 10, 1920, the *Morning Post* correspondent cabled London:

The Mozyr operation was not on a large scale, although its effects have been very considerable. Whether Poland will now proceed with peace negotiations remains to be seen, but it is certain that there is no reason for her to accept any peace which brings her less than the frontiers of 1772. It should be added that the main object of the present Polish policy is to secure an agreement whereby Russia will definitely recognise the 1772 frontier line.

On March 19, 1920, Patek outlined before the Diet Commission Poland's peace terms. They were:

1. Annuling of the partitions of Poland in which Russia participated.
2. Recognition of the States established on the ruins of Russia existing to-day.
3. Return of the State properties comprised in the Polish frontier of 1772, which ought to be restored to the Polish State.
4. Participation of Poland in the gold receipts of the Russian State Bank on the basis of the balance of August 5, 1914, and the restitution of the archives of the libraries.
5. Ratification of the treaty by representatives of the supreme body of Russian representatives.
6. Poland to decide the fate of the territories situated on the west of the 1772 frontiers, in accordance with the will of the populations.

Respecting these terms *The Times* correspondent in Warsaw cabled his journal on March 21, 1920:

The text has met a quite considerable amount of criticism from the point of view of tactics as much as from a sense of horror at the character of the demands. The ideas of the National Democrats about peace are not so much more moderate than those of the Government as to justify their branding M. Patek as an Imperialist, especially since their representatives on the Diet Commission

apparently agreed to the principles on which the Note was to be drafted by him. The Socialist organ *Robotnik* shows some consciousness of the effect which the Note may produce abroad, saying that it contains grave faults and will evoke a shriek from Russia and the Entente about Polish Imperialism. (Our italics.)

The next act of the Polish Government was to inform Moscow that it was willing to discuss terms of peace, that the venue of the Conference should be Borisov, and after some haggling they offered to suspend hostilities in the Borisov sector. Moscow replied agreeing to begin negotiations on April 10th, but stipulating that the venue should be some neutral State and that hostilities should be suspended along the entire front during the negotiations.

The Polish offer was intentionally absurd. Regarding it *The Times* correspondent cabled from Warsaw on April 3, 1920:

The form in which the Polish peace conditions were drafted for submission to the Allied Powers has certainly alienated much sympathy in Britain and America, and even closely associated peoples such as the Letts have found objections to them. These conditions have not yet been presented to the Soviet Government. If it was not the intention of the Polish Government to do so before the peace delegations met it would have been well to couch them in a form less likely to shock opinion outside Poland.

Count Alexander Skrzynski was even more frank. He wrote:

When, however, parliamentary and democratic policy did not permit them [the Soviet peace terms] to be left without an answer, the question of the place where the negotiations might be held was raised in such an offensive spirit that the whole question stopped at that point.¹

Moscow's reply to the Warsaw note stated:

The People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Tchitcherin, regards the proposal to carry on peace negotiations in the midst of military operations as absolutely unacceptable, and throws the responsibility for further bloodshed on the Polish Government. The Soviet Government proposes that the peace negotiations should be held either at Moscow, Petrograd, or Warsaw, under the conditions that the delegates shall be allowed to use the telegraph, and that the secrecy of their communications shall be secured.

The Polish demand for the restoration of the frontiers as they existed in 1772 is unjustifiable, in view of the fact that these frontiers include purely Russian territory.

¹ *Poland and Peace*, p. 40.

However, the Polish Government which was working to plan and had no intention of proceeding with serious peace negotiations in its final reply to Moscow insisted on Borisov as the meeting place. In the first week of April 1920, the Polish Government declared that "*further exchange of notes concerning either armistice or peace negotiations is useless.*"

We repeat that at this juncture the Polish Government did not want serious peace negotiations, and had the Soviet Government agreed to an armistice on the Borisov sector only, the result would simply have assisted Warsaw's schemes.

The *Manchester Guardian* correspondent then in Moscow explained why:

Borisov lies on the main Russian railway line, and near the junction of the west and south-west fronts. It permits the Poles to continue their advance against the Ukraine, while ensuring them from flank attack. Further, in the event of hostilities developing it prevents the Russians from counter-attacking at a point most favourable to them. It can have no other than a military meaning, and that meaning is given to it by the Poles, since they no less determinedly refuse to consider the question of a general armistice.

Concurrently with the Warsaw-Moscow exchange of notes negotiations were feverishly proceeding between Marshal Pilsudski and Petlura for a joint Polish-Ukrainian advance on Kiev, and the ultimate detachment of the Ukraine from Russia.

However, powerful voices were being raised in Poland against this policy. Grabski, leader of the National Democrats, and a member of the peace delegation vigorously protested against the terms to be offered to Russia and resigned from the delegation on April 10, 1920.

At this date the armed forces of Poland occupied an area of Russian territory measuring about 500 miles from north to south and 300 from east to west; the population in this area did not contain more than 8 per cent of Poles.

Pilsudski and his Government were determined on war. They hoped to repeat what had been done by Polish Imperialists during the Tatar occupation of Russia. Taking advantage of Russia's temporary weakness, they aimed at the annexation of Russian territories extending far beyond Poland's ethnographical frontiers.

Between April 15 and 25, 1920, a strict censorship was imposed in Poland whilst the final preparations were being completed for an invasion of Russian territory, and on the latter date the Polish advance on Kiev was begun.

This offensive did not come as a surprise to those who had been following the development of events. Major General Sir. F. Maurice thus commented:

Everyone who has watched the situation in Eastern Europe has been aware of the danger of the renewal of war on a great scale. I have called attention repeatedly to it in these columns for the past three months.¹

When on May 6, 1920, the question of the Polish attack on Soviet Russia was raised in the House of Commons, the following dialogue took place:

Ben Spoor asked the Prime Minister whether the territory now occupied by Poland goes beyond the boundaries assigned to Poland by the Supreme Council.

Bonar Law: The answer is in the affirmative.

Colonel Wedgwood: Will it not be possible to indicate to the Polish Government that the Supreme Council have laid down the boundaries, and no amount of fighting will alter that?

Bonar Law: Poland is aware of that.

Bonar Law was at that time Leader of the House of Commons and was, of course, speaking for the Government. If his words had any meaning they meant that the British Government would not recognize the criminal annexation of any territory to the East of the Curzon Line.

The advance on Kiev was heralded by the following proclamation by Marshal Pilsudski to the Ukrainian people:

The armies of the Polish Republic are moving forward under my command; and have now penetrated far into Ukrainian territory. I want all the inhabitants of the occupied lands to know that the Polish army has come into their midst to expel from the Ukraine a foreign invader, against whom the Ukrainian people had already risen in arms to defend their homes threatened by pillage and massacre.

The Polish troops will remain in the Ukraine only such time as is necessary for a legitimate Ukrainian Government to be formed and set to work. So soon as the future of the Ukrainian State is assured and the Ukrainian people rush themselves to arms to defend their frontiers against the return of the invader—the Polish troops will retire, having fulfilled their glorious duty as liberators of the peoples.

Side by side with the Polish armies, there are now entering the Ukraine many of her gallant sons—with the great Hetman Petlura at their head, who

¹ *Daily News*, April 30, 1920.

during the time of trial through which his country has passed, found in Poland both refuge and protection. I firmly believe that the Ukrainian people will strain all their forces to win back, with the aid of Poland, their liberty and to assure for the fertile fields of their Motherland that happiness and prosperity which are only to be found in peaceful work. The troops of the Polish Republic will bring protection and security to all the inhabitants of the Ukraine without distinction of class, nation or creed. I appeal to the Ukrainian people, and to all the inhabitants of the country, exhorting them to endure with patience the hard realities of war, and to aid as much as possible the Polish army which is shedding its blood for their liberty.

The Polish Government the previous year had denounced these same Ukrainian troops "with the great Hetman Petlura at their head" in the vilest of terms.

There was no mention in the proclamation that the "Ukrainian Government" agreed, or more correctly, had been forced to accept, the following Polish proposal as a price for military assistance against the Soviets:

"A military, economic and political convention will be concluded which will provide for the inclusion of a Minister of Polish Affairs and also another Minister of Polish nationality within the Ukrainian Government."¹

Had the attack been successful and had the whole Ukraine been separated from Soviet Russia, it would have enjoyed as much independence as East Galicia, Western Ukraine, and Western Byelorussia subsequently did under Polish rule from 1920 till 1939.

Though perhaps somewhat surprised by the sudden attack, the Soviet Government did not lose its head, and at once issued a proclamation to its people declaring

Until now the Red troops of the western front have been forbidden to advance. We hoped to return to peaceful life, to plough the land, to work at the lathes. But the Polish "Pans"² do not permit you to do so. They want to make slaves of you. You must sharpen your tried weapon for self-defence. You must inflict such a blow on the Polish landowners and capitalists that its echo will resound in the streets of the world's capitals.

Workmen and workwomen of munition works, to your machines! French Imperialism is supplying the Poles with war munitions. Increase your efforts in producing all the Red warriors need so that they may not experience any want either in cartridges, clothes or boots.

Regiments of the western front! Behind you stand not only the Russian

¹ *The Times*, April 24, 1920.

² Polish for lords.

working peasantry, not only all our working and peasant army, but all who are honest among the Russian people and among the workers of the entire world.¹

Despite the terrific strain to which the Red Army had already been subjected, the Soviet High Command were confident of their ability to hurl back the invaders. As was to be expected, the Polish invasion attracted world attention. In Great Britain the subject was naturally at once discussed in the press. Thus:

As a climax the Warsaw Government registered a preposterous claim for the severance from Russia of all the territory that lay within the frontiers of the pre-1772 Poland.

There is no need to say more of that sequence of events than that they constitute the self-proclaimed policy of a Government resolute against peace.²

We trust, however, that the Poles will not be led astray by their brilliant military success. The great tasks before them lie within their own borders. They should not burden themselves with external responsibilities beyond their strength. Some of their original demands, as presented to the Soviet Government, were fantastic, particularly the colossal claims for compensation for ancient wrongs.³

These two excerpts represented fairly accurately the reactions of the British press.

In passing we may recall that on May 11, 1920, the S.S. *Jolly George* was being loaded at the East India Docks, London, when the dockers discovered that a part of the cargo consisted of munitions of war destined for Poland and refused to proceed with the loading of the vessel. Subsequently the steamer had to sail without the munitions.

The capture of Kiev by the Polish Army was a very spectacular event, but one devoid of all military significance and the occupation of the city was short lived.

The Polish forces never succeeded in occupying more than a small part of the Ukraine. The Red Army began a counter-offensive along the Northern front on May 14, 1920, aiming at the capture of the Vilna-Molodetchno-Minsk railway. This route between the Rivers Dvina and Dnieper is the main route from Russia to Poland and was the most dangerous sector from the standpoint of Poland. The Soviet troops entered Borisov on May 25, 1920, and although in this stage of the campaign they did not attain their objectives, nevertheless by June 2, 1920, they had reached the line Druja (on the Dvina)—Postavi

¹ *Daily News*, May 1, 1920.

² *Ibid.*, Leader.

³ *The Times Leader*, May 1, 1920.

(25 miles east of Svonasiani)—Lake Narotch-Dolkinov (35 miles north-east of Molodetchno)—Borisov, involving an advance of 80 miles deep on a front of 125 miles.

The attack from the north compelled the Polish troops in the Ukraine to mark time, and made it possible for the Red Army to patch up a defensive front in the south.

The Polish Authorities, being what they were, repeated the fatal mistake of all the "White" Generals. A small news item which appeared in the *Manchester Guardian*, June 7, 1920, attracted little attention, but was pregnant with explosive possibilities:

Moscow. 6.6.20

A peasant's rising against the Poles has broken out in the Kiev district.

Polish troops have been despatched to deal with the rebels, who are much incensed owing to their recently acquired lands having been retaken from them by the former owners.

A Polish train with a large number of waggons loaded with munitions has been blown up by the peasant rebels.—*Wireless Press*.

The peasants who constituted the majority of the Ukrainian population were just as anxious in 1920 to drive their Polish "liberators" over the frontier as their forefathers had been centuries earlier, and the hostility of the peasantry was an important factor in the final outcome of the campaign.

It naturally took time to transfer to the Polish front Soviet troops from other parts of Russia which were then fighting the forces of Wrangel, the Allied intervention interests and the Japanese, but when this had been effected, events moved rapidly. The brilliant and dashing Soviet cavalry leader, Budenny, was transferred, together with his troops, from the Caucasus to the Polish front. He tested the front at various points until he found a soft spot south of Kiev, then pierced the enemy's line, penetrated to Zhitomir eighty miles west of Kiev, and harassed the enemy in the country between these towns.

In addition, on June 11, 1920, Soviet forces broke through the Polish line north of Kiev. The conjunction of these two forces constituted a grave danger to the Polish communications with Warsaw; in fact, as a result of this the Polish forces in Kiev were almost cut off and were compelled to evacuate that city on June 12, 1920, and beat a hasty retreat westward.

Kiev, as just mentioned, was evacuated on June 12, 1920, and two days later the new Polish line extended from the Lower Pripet to Zhitomir (eighty miles west of Kiev) and Berditchev.

On June 20, 1920, the Red Army occupied Retshitsa, north of Kiev, and Vinnitsa, south-west of Kiev; by June 25, 1920¹ the line was practically identical with that from which the spring offensive was begun, and by the end of the month, the whole Polish army from Vilna to Kamnetz-Podolsk, a distance of five hundred miles, was in retreat. The Soviet forces occupied Mozyr on June 30, 1920, and Rovno on July 6, 1920.

By the end of the first week of July 1920, the seriousness of the Polish military position was realized, both by the Polish Government and by the representatives of the Allied Governments.

The Government of Poland sent a delegation headed by the Prime Minister, Grabski, to a meeting of the Supreme Council at Spa on July 11, 1920, to solicit Allied aid.

Grabski, perhaps with a sense of ironic humour, in an interview with the press at Spa on July 11, 1920, declared that the Soviet Forces "were provided with war material of the latest kind, which had been taken from the armies of Denikin, Kolchak and Yudenitch."

We do not pretend to know what was in the collective mind of the Allied statesmen who met at Spa, nor whether their public professions corresponded with their real ideas.

However, Lord Curzon (then Foreign Secretary) on behalf of the British Government sent the following message to Moscow on July 12, 1920:

The Soviet Government of Russia has repeatedly declared its anxiety to make peace with all its neighbours. The British Government, which is no less anxious to restore peace throughout Europe, therefore proposed the following arrangement with this object in view:

(a) That an immediate armistice be signed between Poland and Soviet Russia whereby hostilities shall be suspended; the terms of this armistice should provide on the one hand that the Polish Army shall immediately withdraw to the line provisionally laid down last year by the Peace Conference as the eastern boundary within which Poland was entitled to establish a Polish administration. This line runs approximately as follows: Grodno Vapovka, Nomirov, Brest-Litovsk, Doromuch, Ustilug, east of Grubeshov Krilov, and thence west of Rawa-Ruska, east of Przemyśl to the Carpathians. North of Grodno the line which will be held by the Lithuanians will run along the railway running from Grodno to Vilna and thence to Dvinsk. On the other hand, the armistice should provide that the armies of Soviet Russia should stand at a distance of 50 kilometres to the east of this line. In Eastern Galicia

¹ Authority: Communiqué issued by the British War Office, July 7, 1920.

each army will stand on the line which they occupy at the date of the signature of the armistice.

(b) That as soon as possible thereafter a conference sitting under the auspices of the Peace Conference should assemble in London, to be attended by representatives of Soviet Russia, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Finland, with the object of negotiating a final peace between Russia and its neighbouring states. Representatives of Eastern Galicia would also be invited to London to state their case for the purpose of this conference.

Later in this Note Lord Curzon stated:

While the British Government has bound itself to give no assistance to Poland for any purpose hostile to Russia and to take no action itself hostile to Russia, it is also bound under the Covenant of the League of Nations to defend the integrity and independence of Poland within its legitimate ethnographic frontiers; if, therefore, Soviet Russia, despite its repeated declarations accepting the independence of Poland, will not be content with the withdrawal of the Polish armies from Russian soil on the condition of a mutual armistice, but intends to take action hostile to Poland in its own territory, the British Government and its Allies would feel bound to assist the Polish nation to defend its existence with all the means at their disposal.

Note the words: "Within its legitimate ethnographic frontiers." That is roughly what the Curzon Line assigned to Poland.

The Soviet Government replied on July 17, 1920, to the Curzon Note, as follows:

Direct negotiations with Poland are in full harmony with the wishes of the Soviet Government and it declares, therefore, that if the Polish Government addresses to Russia a proposal to enter into peace negotiations the Soviet Government will not reject its proposal, and will also consider in the most friendly spirit any subsidiary proposal as to an armistice or some other means intended to facilitate peace negotiations.

Further the Soviet Government in an endeavour to end the war as speedily as possible, because among other reasons they had still to deal with the last "White" leader, General Wrangel and the Japanese, offered the Poles an even better frontier on condition of course, that the Soviet terms generally, were accepted.

The Note continued: "The Soviet Government also expresses its willingness to agree to a territorial frontier more favourable for the Polish people than the frontiers indicated by the Supreme Council in December last, and proposed once more by the British Government in its ultimatum of July 12."

What the Soviet Government had in mind on this point we shall see in a later page.

Winston Churchill's estimate of the Soviet reply—written some years afterwards when the heat and dust of battle had died down—is well worth quoting to-day. He wrote:

They [the Soviet Government] agreed that the Polish frontier should be the line fixed by Lord Curzon in his Note of July 12. Nothing could be more reasonable.¹

And referring to Lloyd George's estimate of the Soviet reply, Churchill wrote that Lloyd George "was constrained to advise the Polish Government that the Russian terms 'do no violence to the ethnographical frontiers of Poland as an independent State,' and that if they were rejected the British Government could not take any action against Russia."²

The Polish Government, much to its regret—it would have preferred that the Allied Governments should negotiate on its behalf—was advised by Lord Curzon to approach Moscow direct, "asking for an immediate armistice and proposing peace."

In Warsaw a new Government came into power on July 22, 1920, under the Premiership of Witos, and on the same day it despatched the following Note to Moscow:

The Polish Government has been informed of the fact that the Soviet Government, in its answer to the British Note of July 12, stated that it would willingly accept a peace proposition sent to it directly by the Polish Government. The Polish Government, wishing to stop all bloodshed as soon as possible, and to return to peace, proposes to the Soviet Government an immediate armistice and the opening of peace negotiations. A proposal for an armistice has been sent simultaneously by the Chief of the Polish Army to the Chief of the Staff of the Soviet Army.

So serious was the military position of the Poles by this date, that preparations had been made in Warsaw for a general evacuation of the capital should the fall of Grodno be followed by the capitulation of Brabystock. Moscow, however, lost no time in replying to Warsaw: the following telegram was despatched by wireless at 1.15 a.m. on July 24, 1920:

¹ *The World Crisis: The Aftermath*, by Winston Churchill, p. 270.

² *Ibid.*, p. 269.

To Warsaw.

Sapeiha, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The Russian Soviet Government has given orders to the Supreme Command of the Red Army to commence immediately with the Polish Military Command negotiations for the purpose of concluding an armistice and preparing for the future peace between the two countries.

The Russian Command will advise the Polish Command as to the place and date for commencing negotiations between the Military Commands of the two sides.

Chicherin,

People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs.

At the same time a wireless telegram marked "Very Urgent" was sent by the Soviet High Command to the Polish High Command in the same sense, adding:

The Supreme Command will send its representatives furnished with full powers to the place which will be indicated to you by the Command of the Russian front, who will inform you as to the place and date when the Polish representatives will be invited to attend.

Meanwhile, events continued to move rapidly within Poland. On the morning of July 25, 1920, the joint Allied Military Mission, consisting of General Weygand, M. Jusserand, Lord d'Abernon, Sir Maurice Hankey, and General Radcliffe, arrived in Warsaw and were received by President Pilsudski and the Prime Minister, Witos, the same afternoon. "The arrival of the Allied Missions is a cause of quiet gratification to the Poles," cabled *The Times* correspondent the same day.¹

Moscow had agreed with Warsaw that negotiations for an armistice and peace should begin at Baranovitchi, an important railway junction behind the centre of the Red Army lines, on July 31, 1920, and the Polish Commission crossed the line of the front at 8 p.m. on July 30. They met the Soviet delegates on the Brest-Litovsk-Baranovitchi road.

At a joint meeting on August 1, it was revealed that the Polish Delegation was authorized to negotiate only an armistice and not the fundamental conditions of peace. The Soviet side suggested that Warsaw should be asked by wire to forward the necessary additional credentials, and, in order to make it possible for negotiations to be resumed at Minsk on August 4, 1920, the Soviet representatives further

¹ *The Times*, July 27, 1920.

agreed that as soon as a courier had left Warsaw with the mandates it would be willing to proceed with the negotiations for armistice and for the drafting of the main outlines of peace.

The Polish delegates declined the Soviet offer and left for Warsaw on August 2, 1920, to consult their Government. Messages continued to pass between Moscow and Warsaw and although the latter without undue delay agreed in principle to the terms of the proposed conference, the two delegations did not meet again around the table until August 17, 1920.

It is impossible to study the assertions and denials made to the Allies between these two dates by the Governments of Poland and Russia as to responsibility for the delay in the reassembling of the conference, without coming to the conclusion that Warsaw was deliberately pursuing a policy of procrastination in the hope that the Allies would both insist on participating in the negotiations and perhaps even take the field in their defence. After the abortive meeting at Baranovitchi on August 1, 1920, *The Times* correspondent at Warsaw cabled on August 3: "I understand that the point of view of the Polish Government is that they are unwilling to negotiate peace except in conjunction with Britain and France."¹

Meanwhile much was happening at the front and in London and Paris. The Red Army occupied Brest-Litovsk on August 1, Butchatch on August 3, and on the same day debouched along the River Bug on a sixty-six mile front. They occupied Lutsk, Kovel and Ostrov on August 4, and Przasnysz (fifteen miles from the Warsaw-Danzig railway), Sokolov and Vladmir Volhynsk on August 8, 1920. This series of advances was being followed closely on the banks of the Seine and the Thames.

The British Foreign Secretary, Lord Curzon, on August 3, 1920, sent another note to Moscow threatening that if the Red Army continued its advance into Poland, the Allies would come to the aid of the Poles and three days later *The Times* in a leading article (August 6, 1920) declared: "It is a terrible truth that once more we stand upon the edge of a crisis fraught with possibilities only less tragic than those that lowered over us in this first week of August six years ago."

There can be little doubt as to what this meant. However, on the same day as that on which the above-mentioned leading article appeared in *The Times*, Arthur Henderson, Secretary of the Labour Party, sent the following wire to all local Labour Parties:

¹ *The Times*, August 5, 1920.

Extremely menacing possibility extension Polish-Russian war. Strongly urge local authorities immediately organise citizen demonstrations against intervention and supply men, munitions Poland; demand peace negotiations immediate raising blockade, resumption trade relations. Send resolutions Premier and Press; deputise local M.P.s.

That wire was sent on a Friday—on the next two days enormous demonstrations were held throughout the country at which resolutions embodying its proposals were enthusiastically adopted. The opposition of the Labour Movement was decisive. War had become impossible, to the intense relief of the vast majority of the British people. Further, on August 6, Lloyd George agreed to meet Millerand, the French Premier, two days later at Hythe to discuss the situation that had arisen. During the course of the conference on August 8, 1920, Lloyd George received from London a copy of a statement which had been handed to the Foreign Office on the same day by the Soviet Trade Delegation in London on the instruction of its Government. It read:

Immediately on the acceptance by Poland of the armistice terms, which deal principally with the reduction of her armed strength, the Soviet Republic will be prepared to begin withdrawal of her troops to the line drawn by the Supreme Council on December 3, 1919 and indicated once more by Lord Curzon of Kedleston in his Note of July 12 to M. Chicherin, and considerably to reduce the number of Soviet troops on this line, if the Allies, particularly France—undertake not to advance, and not to support any advance, against Soviet Russia on any front and withdraw the army of General Wrangel from the Crimea.

At the conclusion of the second day of the Conference at Hythe on August 9, the following official statement was issued:

The Allies are in complete agreement regarding the action to be taken in reference to the Polish situation, subject, however, to the approval of Parliament to-morrow in the case of Great Britain.

Mr. Lloyd George to-morrow will make a detailed statement, and pending that there is no further official information to be forwarded to the Press.

Whilst Lloyd George and Millerand were carrying on their discussions at Hythe on the afternoon of August 9, 1920, a very different gathering was being held in a committee-room of the House of Commons. It was an emergency meeting of the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress, the National Executive of the Labour Party and the Parliamentary Labour Party, at which a resolution was adopted declaring:

That this joint Conference, representing the Trades Union Congress, the Labour Party, and the Parliamentary Labour Party, feels certain that war is being engineered between the Allied Powers and Soviet Russia, on the issue of Poland and declares that such a war would be an intolerable crime against humanity. It therefore warns the Government that the whole industrial power of the organized workers will be used to defeat this war.

That the executive committees of affiliated organizations throughout the country will be summoned to hold themselves ready to proceed immediately to London for a national conference, and that they be advised to instruct their members to "down tools" on instructions from that national conference and that a council of action be immediately constituted to take such steps as may be necessary to carry the above decisions into effect.

The next day the British press as a whole inveighed against any idea of war on behalf of Poland and *The Times* in a leader stated: "Nobody in this country wants a war with Soviet Russia. The whole feeling of the nation, which is weary of war, is dead against any such suggestion."

On the same day, August 10, 1920, the Prime Minister, Lloyd George, made his much awaited statement to a packed "House." He declared emphatically that the Polish attack on Russia could not be justified, that the sole aim of the Allies was to secure the independence of ethnographical Poland, that Poland had been advised to make peace, and that the Allies would accept any peace arrangements acceptable to Poland. He also indicated what steps would be taken in the event of an unsatisfactory outcome of the Russo-Polish peace talks. Briefly they were:

No action would be taken except to support the struggle for Polish independence.

That support would only be given to a nation that struggles for itself.

No Allied troops would be sent to Poland.

Necessary military advice and guidance would be given.

Economic pressure on Soviet Russia would be exercised either by naval or international action.

No support to Poland if an attack were made upon Soviet Russia inside her own territory.

The Allies leave themselves free to equip Wrangel's force with stores.

Great Britain would cut off trading relations with Russia.

Whilst this debate was proceeding in the House of Commons the peace terms which the Soviet were offering to Poland were published in London. As regards the frontier line the terms read: "The final

frontier of the independent State of Poland shall, in the main, be identical with the line indicated in the Note of Lord Curzon of Kedleston on July 12, 1920, but additional territory shall be given to Poland on the east in the regions of Bialystok and Kholm."

Meanwhile much had been happening on the Russo-Polish front. The Red Army continued its advance and on August 14, 1920, had reached the exterior forts of Warsaw. Complete success appeared to be within its grasp when it received a decisive check, and the correlation of opposing military forces underwent a sudden and decisive change. This was due to a variety of reasons.

The Polish High Command by general agreement was by no means highly efficient, nevertheless it had persistently refused to submit to French leadership until the Red Army was within sight of Warsaw: then, and then only, complete control was vested in the French General, Weygand, a brilliant military strategist.

Warsaw had a magnificent system of fortifications interconnected by roads and light railways, which, though built two generations earlier, were still in good condition. In addition, under French supervision, an immense system of modern trenches, wire entanglements and machine-gun emplacements had been erected. A special press correspondent in the Polish capital at that time cabled "Only prolonged systematic high-explosive shell-fire could blast a way through."¹

By this date the Polish Government had succeeded in raising the strength of its army to a million men, equipped by the Allies with the very latest weapons, in general superior to those in possession of the Soviet Forces, and evidently taught by bitter experience "the Sejm voted by a great majority to put instantly into operation agrarian reform to prove that the rural population when joining the army would fight for their own and not for other people's property."²

As regards the Soviet Forces—the Fourth Army had covered 650 kilometres in five weeks and was naturally exhausted; the army was weak in heavy artillery and aircraft and had very little in the way of motor transport; the whole army transport depended on small peasant carts. "Their equipment is not formidable, their transport is not formidable, their artillery is not a formidable one. They have brought no artillery forward that would reduce a second-rate fortress and could not in the time at their disposal," said Lloyd George, the Prime Minister, speaking in the House of Commons on August 10, 1920.

¹ *Manchester Guardian*, August 17, 1920.

² *Poland and Peace*, by Count Skrzynski, pp. 45-6.

Further, misled no doubt by the rapid retreat of the Poles and underestimating the resilience of the latter under Allied leadership, the Soviet cavalry advanced unduly far ahead of their guns, munitions and food supplies; in addition to all these facts there were some grave miscalculations in military tactics. General Weygand, asked by a journalist in Paris on September 3, 1920, to explain the defeat of the Red Army before Warsaw, replied, "One of the reasons for the defeat of the Russians was their over-confidence and contempt for their adversaries. Their troops advanced without any precautionary measures, and were surprised by the Polish counter-attack from Warsaw."

No doubt there were other contributing factors, but the above-mentioned, by general agreement at the time, were the paramount ones. Under the command of General Weygand on the Polish side, the decisive battle was fought before Warsaw on August 15. Not only was the city saved and a heavy defeat inflicted on the Soviet Forces, but the latter were rolled rapidly eastward.

During the next two weeks, the entire Soviet Line was driven back rapidly. By the end of August, both the Soviet and Polish delegations at Minsk (no progress towards a settlement having been effected) decided to transfer the venue of the Conference to Riga, and the Conference assembled in that city in the third week of September.

It was realized both in Paris and London, that the success of the Poles was due in large measure to Allied assistance and Russian mistakes and in all probability could never be repeated. Consequently General Weygand and the French and British press admonished the Poles to be moderate at the Conference table, not to push too far east, and to stop talking about the 1772 frontiers.

At Riga both sides outlined their terms. The frontier offered by the Soviet spokesmen was slightly more favourable to Poland than the Curzon Line, but the Polish representatives demanded a frontier line much further to the east.

Finally, on October 12, 1920, after much hard bargaining, the Russo-Polish armistice and preliminary peace terms were signed in Riga and they came into operation six days later.

The Conference reassembled at Riga on November 13th, whilst three days later the last of General Wrangel's forces were driven out of Russian soil, embarking at Kerch for Constantinople and elsewhere.

As a consequence the Soviet peace delegates now faced their opposite numbers with somewhat stronger cards in their hands than they had held for months. Not only was the Soviet's military position rather

stronger, but Poland's economic position was well-nigh desperate. By the fourth week of November, 1920, the Polish currency was dropping at the rate of about fifty daily against the pound sterling. But all this notwithstanding, the Soviet Government desiring to establish peace as soon as possible, agreed to terms not very different from those of the armistice and not at all favourable to Soviet Russia. Finally, after complicated and long drawn out negotiations, the final Peace Treaty was signed at Riga on March 18, 1921, and ratified on the 20th of the following month.

Under the terms of the Treaty the Soviets among other things, agreed to give Poland thirty million gold roubles as her share of the Tsarist Government's gold reserve, and locomotives, rolling-stock, etc., to the value of twenty-nine million roubles, as Poland's share of the railway wealth of Tsarist Russia. Commenting on the final terms, Count Alexander Skrzynski wrote: "The conditions of the peace were not very different from the preliminary agreement, notwithstanding that the Bolsheviks recovered their assurance after having in the meantime entirely defeated Wrangel's army, thereby overcoming the last attempt to overthrow their regime."

It will be seen from Map No. IV that the Russo-Polish frontiers¹ under the Treaty of Riga extended east far beyond the Curzon Line and included within the frontiers of the Polish Republic millions of Byelorussians and Ukrainians. This is not open to question. The Poles themselves at that time made no secret of it.

Count Skrzynski stated:

Under the Treaty of Riga, Poland received one-third of the White Russian ethnographical territory, two-thirds of what is called Polesie, not defined from the ethnographical point of view and forming a transition between the White Russians and the Ukrainians (or the so-called "Little Russians") and finally the western part of Volhynia with a population comprising a majority of Ukrainians. To these must also be added Galicia with a population of about 3,000,000 Ukrainians and a strip running along the Western Russian frontier some 200 kilometres wide, with a non-Polish majority. The political problem of national minorities in the Eastern provinces is therefore the most important, and at the same time the most difficult.²

Later in the same book, Count Skyrznski stated: "Poland took these provinces which are inhabited by a majority of White Russians and Ukrainians, in order to regain at least a part of her former land reserves for the purpose of colonizing the surplus of her population."³

¹ Shown on map IV as "pre-war frontiers." ² *Poland and Peace*, pp. 78-9.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

IV

THE CURZON LINE

(Reprinted from "Manchester Guardian," January 8, 1944)



And at the Peace Conference in Paris, 1919, they were well aware of these facts. To quote the authoritative historian of the Conference, Temperley ("A History of the Peace Conference in Paris") . . . "it may be pointed out that the territory inhabited by definitely Polish majorities amounts to something like 90,000 square miles." However, the Republic of Poland prior to the outbreak of the War in 1939, on the authority of the *Statesmen's Year Book*, covered an area of 150,052 square miles, i.e. Poland annexed an area of 60,000 square miles,¹ inhabited by non-Poles (an area larger than that of England and Wales combined).

And the British Labour Party, while the facts were still fresh in the public mind, recorded what that Movement thought both about the criminal invasion of Russia by Poland and her annexation of Russian territory.

The Party, in its *Speakers' Handbook*, 1922, declared:

Intense indignation was caused in Russia by a most unprovoked attack by Poland in 1920. Since the war, Poland has fallen under the influence of a violent militant party. In alliance with a South Russian adventurer—General Petlura—the Poles laid claim to the whole of Russian territory west of the Dnieper, including the great city of Kiev; and then proceeded to invade the Ukraine.²

And a little further on:

On the eastern side of Poland, the new Polish State is in possession of an enormous area and a vast population, which is Russian in overwhelming majority. About ten millions of people have thus been "bartered like chattels" to Poland, who ought, according to the principle of self-determination, to belong to Russia.³

And the Handbook stressed that "The policy of Labour is to rectify these unjust territorial arrangements and to give full effect to the principle of self-determination."

Mr. B. H. Sumner (Fellow of Balliol College, sometime Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford), in his *Survey of Russian History*, published in 1944, stated:

The Western lands [Ukraine and Byelorussia] and eastern Galicia were, and always had been, non-Polish in the sense that, taken as a whole, the great majority of the inhabitants were Ukrainian and White Russian or Lithuanian.⁴

¹ Note. This of course is only an approximate figure.

² p. 138.

³ p. 147.

⁴ p. 200.

Roman Dyboski freely admitted in regard to the Polish Republic, that "one-third of her population is not Polish in race and speech."

Between 1921 and 1931 many Polish settlers and officials moved into Byelorussia and the Ukraine, yet *The Times* after a very thorough analysis of the 1931 (Polish) census, came to the following conclusion: "On a liberal estimate, there were hardly more than 2,250,000 to 2,500,000 Poles east of the Curzon Line in a total population of over 11,000,000."¹

We do not think it necessary to labour the point further, the territories east of the Curzon Line are incontestably inhabited overwhelmingly by Byelorussians and Ukrainians.

It remains to be added that quite unduly favourable though the Treaty of Riga was to Poland, its conditions were not kept faithfully by the Polish Government. Thus, according to Article 5 of the Riga Treaty both parties undertook not to create or support on their territory organizations which set themselves the aim of armed struggle against the other party. Yet before six months had elapsed Petlura was permitted to organize armed detachments in Poland. These bands again and again attacked the Soviet Ukraine, and villages situated in Soviet Byelorussia were raided by them.

¹ January 12, 1944.

Chapter X

FROM THE TREATY OF RIGA TO THE OUTBREAK OF THE WAR (1939)

THE SOVIET-POLISH PEACE TREATY as already mentioned was finally signed at Riga on March 18, 1921. That, however, was not the end of the story. The conditions had been forced on a temporarily weak Russia and every Allied statesman knew that this Eastern Alsace-Lorraine would not be tolerated by a recovered Russia. The Allied statesmen temporized. So long as Lloyd George remained Prime Minister, despite all efforts of the Poles, the British Government refused to recognize the new frontiers. After he left office in the autumn of 1922, the Poles redoubled their efforts but still without success. Finally, however, the Council of Ambassadors sitting in Paris on March 14, 1923, without any reference to the Soviet Government decided with many misgivings to accept the Eastern frontiers of Poland as laid down in the Treaty of Riga.

"Only in the spring of 1923," wrote Count Skrzynski, "in view of the international situation created by the Lithuanian attempt to seize Memel, did Polish diplomacy succeed in obtaining from the Allied Powers, on March 14, 1923, the definite recognition of the Eastern boundary of Poland in its entirety."¹

At the same session the Council of Ambassadors decided to confirm the seizure of Vilna by the Polish General Zeligowski in 1920. Had Lloyd George remained at the helm in Great Britain we very much doubt whether the British Government would have agreed to this unjust and dangerous decision.

"The Conference of Ambassadors," commented the *Manchester Guardian*, "has once again gently placed the diadem of success upon the brow of armed lawlessness."²

On the same day the Soviet Government sent a strong note of protest to the Allied Governments against the decision of the Council of Ambassadors. It is very important to recall this fact. The Soviet Government was in no way morally committed to recognize the decision of the Council of Ambassadors.

The internal Government of Poland does not concern us here, only in so far as it reacted on Russo-Polish relations, but it is necessary to

¹ *Poland and Peace*, p. 49.

² March 15, 1923.

draw attention to the fact that for all practical purposes democratic government ceased to exist in Poland after Pilsudski's military *coup d'état* in May 1926. True, the Sejm continued to meet and elections were held, but the real rulers of Poland were the "Colonels." Poland was aptly called "The Colonels' Republic." A new Constitution was adopted April 1935 which was a travesty of democracy.

"President Moscicki signed Poland's new Constitution to-night," cabled the *Daily Herald* Warsaw correspondent. "It becomes operative to-morrow and makes the President absolute ruler of the country. It is assumed that Marshal Pilsudski, the Minister of War and virtual Dictator of Poland, will now become President.

"His rights will include: Appointment and dismissal of the Cabinet, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, and the President of the Supreme Court. He will be empowered to summon and dissolve Parliament, decide on peace or war, and negotiate agreements with foreign Powers."¹

"The President has become chief of the State in fact as well as in name," commented *The Times* editorially, April 25, 1935, "with command of the forces and power to dismiss and appoint Ministers, to dissolve and summon the Sejm, and to nominate one of the two candidates for the succession to his office, the other being chosen by a body appointed by the party in power. Such a system leaves no loopholes for rival parties and influences, even if they were strong enough to make use of them . . . Such a version of Parliamentary methods may be distasteful to English democrats; but it must be remembered that the record of democratic practice in Poland is not a good one."

When the elections were held in the autumn of 1935, the opposition parties refused to participate in them.

"The majority of the Opposition in the last Parliament—representing several million voters—decided immediately after the enactment of the electoral laws to take no part in the present election," cabled *The Times* correspondent from Warsaw, "and they have adhered to their decision. The National Democratic Party, the Socialists, the People's Party (Peasants), and several others have therefore faded out of the political picture—at least for the present."²

Again in the autumn of 1938, the Opposition parties decided to boycott the elections. "Final returns of yesterday's elections to the Polish Diet," cabled the *Manchester Guardian* correspondent from

¹ April 24, 1935.

² September 9, 1935.

Warsaw, "show that the National Unity Camp, or pro-Government party, has obtained a vast majority and will have about 170 of the 208 seats. Most of the other leading parties boycotted the elections."¹

So much for the form of Government in Poland between the two world wars.

We shall now deal briefly with the treatment which the Byelorussians and Ukrainians received at the hands of the Poles between 1921 and 1939. Under the Treaty of Versailles 1919 Poland undertook certain specific obligations concerning the treatment of minorities. The relevant paragraph read:

Poland consents to the right of every member of the Council of the League to draw the attention of the Council to a breach, or a danger of a breach of any of those obligations. The Council will then act in such a manner and issue such instructions as it will deem appropriate to the case and its circumstances.

Article VII of the Treaty provided for special rights for the Ukrainians, Byelorussians and Russians who had remained in the part of the Ukraine and Byelorussia which was annexed by Poland. This Article laid down that in accordance with the principles of the equality of rights and of nationality, all persons of Russian, Ukrainian or Byelorussian nationality in Poland should have all the rights essential for the development of their culture, language and religion. Poland did not fulfil these conditions.

Actually the Polish Government persecuted and oppressed the Ukrainians and Byelorussians in every possible way. While in the Soviet Ukraine and in Soviet Byelorussia prosperity and culture developed rapidly, in Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia poverty and ignorance were rampant.

Half the peasants in Western Ukraine had no horses, and only forty-seven per cent had cows. Fifty to seventy per cent of arable land was in the hands of Polish landlords. Consumption of sugar and salt decreased to the minimum. The number of illiterate Ukrainians reached sixty per cent. The Polish Government sent into Ukrainian towns and villages military detachments to carry out bloody "pacification" of the discontented.

In Western Byelorussia the Polish gentry brought the peasants to the limit of poverty. The Byelorussian peasant, according to Polish papers published at that time, was forced to go back from the iron

¹ November 8, 1938.

hammer to the stone hammer, from the plough to hand labour, from the iron nail to the wooden peg. All the best fields and forests were taken away from Byelorussian peasants and handed over to the Polish landlords.

By 1939 there was not a single Byelorussian elementary or senior school in Western Byelorussia. Use of the Byelorussian language was punished by imprisonment.

As already mentioned the Soviet Government protested against the decision of the Ambassadors' Council of March 14, 1923, respecting the frontiers laid down in the Treaty of Riga. In the course of that note, the Soviet Government stated:

"By the Treaty of Riga Russia and the Ukraine renounced their rights to the territories situated to the west of their new Polish frontier but this does not in any way imply that the fate of these territories is a matter of indifference to them."¹

That was a clear warning to the Polish Government that the Soviet peoples could not regard with indifference any ill-treatment or persecution of their blood-brothers in Western Byelorussia and in the Western Ukraine. It is no exaggeration to state that the treatment of these unfortunate people by their Polish overlords was one long religious, cultural and economic martyrdom. Volumes of evidence could be quoted in support of this serious indictment. Here we can only quote a few extracts from the British press.

Stephen Graham, a protagonist of Tsardom and a bitterly prejudiced opponent of the Soviet regime, after visiting the Eastern frontier districts of Poland wrote in *The Times*:

The border region of Russia is called the Kresi, and is some hundreds of miles long. Ethnographically it belongs to Poland.² The greater landowners are Polish, the lesser Russian. The peasantry is mostly Russian . . . I have just completed a tour of the whole region. There is poverty, discontent, and exasperation everywhere. The Russians are passive, not rebellious. Because of it they go under.

Referring to Vilna, Graham wrote:

After ten years I hardly recognised it again . . . Culture had gone; one felt the absence also of spiritual force. Amid effaced inscriptions and statueless bases walked a jaded-looking riff-raff. The price of a bath is five times the

¹ *Manchester Guardian*, March 19, 1923.

² Graham was wrong on the latter point. The territories were ethnographically Ukrainian and Byelorussian and belonged historically to Russia,

price of a meal. The broken stone pavements, repaired with rotting wood, the unwashed streets, the thick smells, form a strange base for one of the most beautiful cities of old Russia.

Graham continued:

When one gets out to the country towns of the border, to Molodechno, Baranowicze, Luniniec, the impression of squalor is intensified. . . . The farmer is made desperate by his taxes. I met a young fellow in the Pinsk district who reckoned his income, when all taxes were paid, to have been two kilograms of bread a day. That was two years ago. This year, owing to failure of crops, it is half a kilogram a day.¹

Coming from Stephen Graham this is a damning impeachment.

Three years later, the Warsaw correspondent of *The Times* in a long article sympathetic to the Pilsudski Government, recorded the following grudging admission:

The 1,500,000-odd White Russians in the north-east of Poland and 4,000,000-odd Ukrainians in the south-east, never having been reconciled to a Polish Administration, are with very few exceptions, unwilling citizens, or revolutionaries when they have been educated, and an easy quarry for the agitator when they belong to the great majority of illiterates. The Soviet has been alive to its opportunities for exploiting the discontent in these minorities, aided by the mistakes of Polish Governments and the rigidity of Polish officials. In certain sections of the borderland a very dangerous agitation was recently brought to light.²

The only comment required here is that no "agitator" can exploit grievances which do not exist. According to this correspondent, the Frontier Guards had after a long effort succeeded in establishing security on the frontier, but he added: "Unfortunately, there has been no parallel improvement in the administration; educational and linguistic grievances are unsatisfied, and economic distress is universal."

The correspondent gave a warning to the Polish Government which the events following the German attack on Poland in 1939 have fully justified. He wrote: "Agitation with a revolutionary purpose has had unquestionable success, so that it needs no stretch of the imagination to perceive that in their present condition the White Russian and Ukrainian provinces would detract heavily from the armed strength of Poland in a conflict, and that, to the Soviet in particular, they would afford the strategic zone of unrest which was formerly the objective of the bandits."³

¹ *The Times*, October 3, 1924.

² June 27, 1927.

³ *Ibid.*

"Bandits," that is the term which Vichy later applied to the French Maquis with just as little justification.

The Warsaw correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* cabled:

One specific grievance of the Ukrainians is that, because of the peculiarities of Galician law, they are virtually denied a voice in local government and municipal matters. Another is that the land laws and the conditions of land-ownership in that section of Poland are extremely irksome to the Ukrainians because they virtually condemn the peasants to a state of serfdom.¹

One important result of this, according to the *Manchester Guardian* correspondent, was that "It is quickening the national spirit and stimulating a feeling of hatred that may some day result in the oppressed becoming the oppressors."²

The *Manchester Guardian* in a lengthy cable from its Berlin correspondent headed "The Tragedy of the Ukraine" stated:

I have selected the following cases from a large number that are dreadful almost beyond belief. And even the wealth of material that has come into my possession is only a part of what has actually been perpetrated by the Polish detachments who are still "pacifying" (to use the official term) the Polish Ukraine.³

Here we can only quote one item from the correspondent's terrible list:

On the 27th and 28th September, cavalry detachments raided several villages in the district of Grudek Jagiellonski. Ruinous requisitions were made, and many peasants were terribly beaten. The following were beaten to death: Olexa Mensals (in the village of Bartatow), Mikolaj Moroz and Stefan Siktasz (in Stawczany), Antoni Szandra (Kiernice), and Hrynko Szmagala (Lubien Wielki).⁴

The correspondent summed up: "The Polish terror in the Ukraine is now worse than anything that is happening anywhere in Europe."

During the period covered by these quotations, the Soviet Union was not a member of the League of Nations and consequently the Byelorussians and Ukrainians had no champion at Geneva.

However, in 1934, the Soviet Union became a member of the League. What was Poland to do? Soviet Russia was now powerful and Maxim Litvinov had made his mark at Geneva. Pilsudski and Beck acted quickly. To quote a well-known Polish publicist, Stanislaw Mackiewicz:

¹ November 23, 1928.

² Ibid.

³ October 14, 1930.

⁴ Ibid.

When on September 8th, 1935, Russia became a member of the League with a permanent seat on the Council, Poland was anxious to prevent Russia from making use of the League to interfere in Polish domestic affairs.

Beck declared on September 13th, 1934, that Poland would no longer collaborate with the League in carrying out the minority treaties. This declaration was met by indignant protests from the delegates of Britain (Sir John Simon), France (Louis Barthou), and Italy (Baron Aloisi).¹

The writer continued: "The French Press, furious at the failure of the Eastern Pact, accused Beck of concerting his action with Hitler's campaign against the League. Some fanatical Polish Francophiles went so far as to share that view. It is only fair, however, to state that Poland had, at the most, made use of a convenient moment for setting herself free of potentially dangerous entanglements. Poland could hardly be expected to defend the prestige of the League against her own, especially as her safety was also threatened."²

Expressed in blunt English, this meant that the Polish Government was alarmed at the prospect of an exposure at Geneva of their persecution of the Byelorussians and Ukrainians.

True, in 1935, the Polish authorities promised the Ukrainian political organizations fair treatment for their followers. But the promise was not kept. In October 1936, the Ukrainian Nationalists' Democratic Organization—a very mild body—in the course of a declaration referring to the agreement of the previous year stated that it:

Has not brought the expected results. The normalisation of Polish-Ukrainian relations can only be of service to both parties, the Ukrainian minority and the Polish State, if it gives back to the Ukrainians all the rights lost since 1919. But although the Ukrainian party has shown the utmost goodwill the normalisation has not produced the results expected. Of the Ukrainian demands laid before the Polish Diet (of which Mr. Mudryj is vice-chairman) extremely little has been conceded.³

The *Manchester Guardian's* cable, which was from its Warsaw correspondent, continued:

The resolution expresses keen dissatisfaction with the situation in regard to agrarian reform. The Ukrainians have always demanded that when large estates in Southern Poland are broken up the land should be distributed amongst Ukrainians and not given to Polish peasants brought in from other parts of the country. In this regard the situation is "worse than ever." The resolution goes so far as to appeal to "all Ukrainians" and particularly the peasants, to fight for the "natural right of the Ukrainian peasant to land."

¹ *Colonel Beck and his Policy*, by Stanislaw Mackiewicz, pp. 56-7.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Manchester Guardian*, October 13, 1936.

Even the hungry children of the Ukrainians were discriminated against—Princess Sapieha, an American authoress who had married a Polish Prince, describing her personal experiences stated:

At one of Amelia's committee meetings, the Rawa Ruska Colonel came to talk to us about the Ruthenian situation. He had marked the number of Ruthenian and Polish "souls" on a list of the various villages in the district. He wanted us to organize the work among the children, wherever the majority was Polish, on a patriotic basis. He suggested excluding the Ruthenians from the free meals. In the places which were preponderantly Ruthenian, he asked us to have the Polish children taught apart. He proposed an energetic revival of Polish games, Polish dances and Polish prayers.¹

Religious persecution was added to political and economic suppression. The Poles were Roman Catholic but the Byelorussians and Ukrainians were Orthodox and Uniats. M. Evlogi, one-time Orthodox Archbishop of Volhyn and Jitomir and later head of the Orthodox Church in France, described the conditions in the Volhyn and Kholm diocese thus:

Without exaggeration, it may be said that aggressive fanatical Catholicism has built up there a system of persecution against Orthodoxy. The assignment of Orthodox clergy there is extremely difficult. Many Orthodox churches in Kholm have been converted into Catholic churches, while others have been burned and demolished. Even the ancient Kholm Cathedral, which in its age-long history has never been a Latin temple, has been converted into a Catholic church. This condition of Orthodoxy in the regions occupied by Poland resembles the long-forgotten religious persecutions of the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries.²

In fact, Stanislaw Mackiewicz is nearly equally downright. He wrote:

The question of the Orthodox Church might have even played an important part in Poland's favour if it were not for the official policy towards that Church. It was at first stupid and then criminal from the point of view of Polish interests. The responsibility for the terrible blunders in the treatment of the Orthodox population lies with the Prime Minister, Skladkowski [Prime Minister from 1936 till the fall of Poland] and his assistants: Borkowski, the Director of the Department of Religious Denominations; and Paprocki, the Director of the Department of Nationalities.³

¹ *Polish Profile*, by Virgilia Sapieha, pp. 238–9.

² *Manchester Guardian*, March 8, 1930, quoting from *Izvestia*.

³ *Colonel Beck and His Policy*, by Stanislaw Mackiewicz, p. 55.

So much for the conditions of the Byelorussians and Ukrainians under Polish rule.

Except for very short periods the Polish authorities between 1921 and 1939 pursued a policy of unqualified enmity towards the Soviet Union.

At first there were many frontier incidents, many hostile incursions into Soviet territory, but as the Soviet Union grew stronger these incidents gradually died down.

Successive Polish Governments right up to the spring of 1939 were constantly plotting and scheming (a) to dismember the Soviet Union; (b) to build up a bloc of States separating the Soviet Union from Western Europe. No secret was made of these intentions. Stanislaw Mackiewicz, a keen admirer and supporter of Marshal Pilsudski wrote:

He [Pilsudski] visualised a Poland, as strong as possible, associated with a Ukraine governed from Kiev and supported in turn by a free Caucasus. Poland would thus be at the head of a long chain of anti-Russian nations, spreading from the Gulf of Finland, from Tallinn, to the Caspian, Tiflis, and Baku.¹

This was only half the scheme. The author continued:

Pilsudski planned a union of the countries menaced by the common German and Russian danger. His eye went from the snows of Sweden and Finland to the mosques of Turkey. The task was difficult. Out of the haze of great plans, there came only two practical achievements: (1) the collaboration with Estonia, that small bridgehead of Russia (this was not very much, for Estonia could offer little help and would require a great deal); (2) the alliance with Rumania, a country with seventeen million inhabitants, rich, though not particularly well governed.

Pilsudski's policy was right not only from the point of view of Poland, but also from the point of view of the other nations situated between Russia and Germany and yet he found until the time of his death no adherents other than Estonia and Rumania.²

We only wish to make one comment on this, i.e. none of these countries were menaced by the Soviet Union.

Stanislaw Mackiewicz bitterly attacked Prague because "the Czechs engineered the return of Russia to European politics, disregarding the objections of Poland, Rumania and Hungary."³

After Pilsudski's death in May 1935, Colonel Beck, the then Foreign

¹ *Colonel Beck and His Policy*, by Stanislaw Mackiewicz, p. 77.

² *Ibid.*, p. 77.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

Minister, remained at the Foreign Office and continued the Marshal's policy of hostility towards the Soviet Union until on September 17, 1939, he fled across the Rumanian frontier as an exile.

True, Poland and the Soviet Union concluded a non-aggression pact in July 1932 and in May 1934 this pact was extended for ten years, but this extension was only accepted by Poland after a similar pact had been concluded with Germany. But to paraphrase Mr. Lloyd George, the vintage of the Soviet-Polish Pact was badly bottled and soon went sour.

The Polish Government determinedly and unfortunately with success opposed the proposed Eastern Locarno (Eastern Pact of Mutual Guarantee), whose aim was to include the U.S.S.R., Germany, Poland, the Baltic States and Czechoslovakia in a pact of non-aggression and mutual assistance. The proposal had finally to be dropped because Poland and Hitler's Germany refused to accept it.

To quote again from Stanislaw Mackiewicz: "In 1934 the French Foreign Secretary, Louis Barthou, sponsored the idea of an 'Eastern Pact' or 'Eastern Locarno' . . . Barthou's plan was not realized, mainly owing to the opposition of Poland."¹

After this proposed Pact had been killed by the joint efforts of Poland and Hitler's Germany, the U.S.S.R. and France in May 1935 signed the Franco-Soviet Mutual Assistance Pact, but the Polish Government did their utmost to prevent its ratification.

"The striking manifestation of unity," cabled the *Daily Telegraph* correspondent from Warsaw, "given by the Polish Press—both Government and Opposition—in the past 24 hours in condemning the Franco-Soviet Pact is significant. Not for many years has the Press been so agreed over foreign affairs."²

Why this striking manifestation? Had Berlin anything to do with it? The correspondent continued: "In my message last night I stated that there must have been some development in Paris or Berlin since Monday to explain this decided change. I now learn that M. Lipski, Polish Ambassador in Berlin, paid a surprise visit to Warsaw on Tuesday, of which no mention has been made in the newspapers."³

On the day on which the *Daily Telegraph* correspondent sent his first message, *The Times* Warsaw correspondent cabled: "More serious comment, amounting almost to a threat, is the statement that ratification of the Franco-Soviet Pact may lead Germany to denounce the

¹ *Colonel Beck and His Policy*, by Stanislaw Mackiewicz, p. 48.

² February 14, 1936.

³ *Ibid.*

Locarno Treaties and may bring about a Franco-German estrangement that would be disturbing to the whole of Europe. It is not difficult to see behind this comment that Poland would prefer Franco-German to Franco-Soviet friendship."¹

The deduction to which these outbursts point needs no emphasizing; however, the Polish rage was impotent and the Franco-Soviet Pact much to the chagrin of the Polish Government was ratified, March 26, 1936.

After Germany had reintroduced conscription and reoccupied the Rhineland, in other words had taken the preliminary steps in her policy of aggression, the Polish Government vacillated between two policies, i.e. to throw in her lot with Germany and demand colonies or to line up with Britain and France.

"Poland is the latest claimant for colonies," cabled the *Daily Mail* correspondent in Berlin. "Her claim is being sympathetically heard in Germany. The German press to-day prints Warsaw messages which argue that the Polish population increases by more than 400,000 a year, that a third of the country population cannot find work on the land, and that therefore 8,000,000 people should be taken from the land to work in industry. But, it is claimed, lack of raw materials makes this impossible."²

The fallacy of the reasoning need not detain us here.

The *Times* correspondent in Warsaw, April 7, 1938, in the course of a long cable headed "Colonies for Poland," stated:

The annual "Colonial Days" campaign, which began to-day and ends on Wednesday, is on a much larger scale than in former years, and demonstrations are to be held throughout Poland on Sunday to impress on public opinion the urgency of the colonial problem. Every day for a week, moreover, the wireless will make the public "colonial-minded," and the campaign was launched last night with a broadcast speech by General Kwasniewski, the president of the Colonial and Maritime League.³

We need hardly add that the Polish technique here displayed was borrowed without any alterations from Germany. The correspondent concluded his cable with this warning: "While the desire of the leaders of Poland to unite public opinion on any question can readily be understood, the concentration of attention on 'colonial demands' may have a deeper significance than is yet realized. If these demands continue to be ignored, a public opinion which would not at present

¹ *The Times*, February 13, 1936. ² October 6, 1936. ³ April 8, 1938.

welcome too close an association with the Powers which have put forward similar demands may be persuaded to believe that only by making common cause with those Powers could Poland's colonial requirements be realized."

It is hardly necessary to add that the "Powers which had put forward similar demands" were Japan, Italy and Germany.

"Poland's claim to colonies," cabled the Warsaw correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* is being raised afresh here in the official and other papers to-day and is, I understand, the subject of discussions in political quarters. Inspired press articles declare that while Germany is soon to demand the return of her colonies from France and England, Poland, too, being a big European Power, should quickly register her demand."¹

The correspondent concluded: "It is recalled in Polish political quarters to-night that Mussolini has already promised to support Poland's colonial claims, and I understand that a conference is to take place between the Italian and Polish diplomatists for that purpose very shortly. The attitude of Germany is not known."

The *Daily Telegraph* Warsaw correspondent, referring to an expected visit to Warsaw by Ribbentrop on January 26, 1939, cabled:

The impression that Polish opinion is being prepared for a deeper interpretation of the non-aggression pact with Germany finds a substantial measure of confirmation to-day in the official statement announcing the visit next week of Herr von Ribbentrop, the German Foreign Minister, to Warsaw, which is published in the *Gazeta Polska*.²

The correspondent continued: "There appears to be no likelihood of Poland joining the anti-Communist Pact, or even that she will be asked to do so at present. but it must now be assumed that *it has been decided to give moral and diplomatic support to Germany and Italy in whatever colonial claims they may formulate against Britain and France.*" (Our italics.)

The sequel is, of course, notorious. Poland did not enter the Axis camp but she toyed with the idea. The Polish Government's final decision was motived not by moral considerations, not by any feelings of gratitude towards Great Britain and France, but by distrust. Distrust of Germany.

During the Anglo-Soviet-French negotiations in the spring and early summer of 1939, Poland was an intransigent stumbling block to an agreement.

¹ January 19, 1939.

² January 19, 1939.

Military experts and well-informed publicists were convinced that, without Soviet aid, Poland would be helpless against Germany.

Mr. Lloyd George, referring to the guarantee given in the spring by the British Government to Poland against German aggression, declared:

It looked magnificent, but men who had some knowledge of the problems pointed out to him [the Prime Minister] that it was not war.

I was the first to call attention to that obvious fact in the House of Commons. I denounced it as sheer madness to give such a pledge in the absence of military support from Russia.

Russian troops could alone hope to reach the battlefield in time to save the Polish army from being crushed by an overwhelming German superiority in men, and especially in equipment.

The Chief of our General Staff was abroad in France when this hare-brained pledge was given. I have good reason to believe that on his return he and his advisers pointed out that we did not possess the means to redeem it.¹

Again, to give but one more example, Commander Stephen King-Hall, the well-known commentator on Foreign affairs, in the *K. H. News Letter* September 22, 1939, pointed out the extremely serious situation which would confront the Poles in a war with Germany, without a firm military agreement with the Soviet Union. Referring to a visit he paid to Poland in May 1939, Commander King-Hall, said:

Whilst in Warsaw I had a long talk about the strategy of a Polish-German war with Colonel Beck's *chef de cabinet*. He told me that he had heard that I had shocked about twenty Polish journalists by telling them—in answer to their enquiries—that it was out of the question to suppose that British battle-ships would appear in the Baltic. I explained to him that I was equally shocked by the astonishing optimism displayed by my Polish friends. So we got to the point when he was good enough to ask me to make an appreciation of the military situation. In summary I said: "Leaving aside, for the moment, political considerations, the proper course for Poland is to regard the whole of her territory as a vast forward zone, in which the German lightning stroke will exhaust itself during the autumn. You will have to sacrifice 25 per cent of your forces and all your materials in trying to hold up and impede the German advance. If you are lucky you might be able to stand for the winter on the Vistula and Bug, but personally I doubt it. If I am right, 75 per cent of your forces will have to be concentrated in two bodies north and south of the great Pripet marshes on the Polish-Russian frontier. In the spring of 1940 these forces, supplied from Russia, and with their centre protected by the impenetrable marshes, will have to march westwards and drive out the Germans, who by that time will be under pressure in the west.

¹ *Sunday Express*, July 23, 1939.

My friend saw the point of all this, but of course we both agreed that assuming my military analysis was sound, *its application in practice was entirely dependent upon the creation of a water-tight Soviet-Polish alliance. Was that possible? My friend thought not.* (Our italics.)

Despite the unquestionable facts of the military situation of Poland the Polish Government categorically and uncompromisingly refused every proposal put forward during the Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations for military collaboration on her territory with Soviet Forces, and her attitude was an important contributing factor to the complete failure of the negotiations.

The crass stupidity of the British Government in giving a guarantee to Poland without a prior military alliance with the Soviet Union need not detain us here, except to add that although accepting the British guarantee, nevertheless throughout the fateful Anglo-Soviet-French negotiations the Polish Government refused every proposal by the British and French for Polish-Soviet military collaboration on Polish territory, which was the only practical way of implementing the British guarantee to Poland.

Chapter XI

THE OUTBREAK OF THE WAR AND THE AFTERMATH

GERMAN TROOPS INVADED POLAND ON SEPTEMBER 1, 1939. Having rejected the offer of Soviet aid the German-Polish war took exactly the course which military experts had predicted except that the debacle was even more speedy than had been anticipated. Within ten days of the commencement of hostilities the Poles, who had lost to the Germans a large proportion of their most valuable economic areas, were in a well-nigh hopeless position.

It was clear by September 10 what a tremendous difference the acceptance of the Soviet offer would have made. As Lloyd George so justly wrote:

We must not conceal from ourselves the enormous difference it would have made to our chances if at this hour the great air fleet of Germany, which is so appreciably facilitating the advance of her armies in Poland, were confronted by the equally powerful fleet of Russia—and if two powerful Russian armies were advancing, one upon East Prussia and the other towards Cracow.

This was the plan placed before our military missions by Voroshilov, the Soviet War Minister. The tragic story of the rejection of this plan has yet to be told, and responsibility for the stupidities that lost us Russia's powerful support justly affixed and sternly dealt with.¹

A week later, September 17, 1939, the then existing situation was thus summed up by *The Times* special correspondent, cabling his paper from Zaleszczyki (on the Polish-Rumanian frontier):

The Polish military situation which a week ago was described in this correspondence as an orderly retreat with the army intact, has now become the exact opposite. The Polish front has collapsed completely, and it is plain that little more remains for the Germans to do except mop up what is left of a gallant army of more than 1,500,000 men . . .

One instance of the appalling chaos is the fact that the British and French military missions were not allowed to approach the front except apparently for the defence of Lvov. Much of the time during these past ten days, separate units of the Polish army had not the vaguest idea of where General Headquarters were situated. They had also no more than a vague idea of where the fronts were except when they heard the German wireless communiques.²

¹ *Sunday Express*, September 10, 1939. ² *The Times*, September 18, 1939.

Many military correspondents have given similar pictures of the rout of the Poles.

Why did the Poles collapse so rapidly? Why was the Polish State with 30,000,000 inhabitants so weak? The answer is not in doubt. One important reason undoubtedly was that the eight million Ukrainians and three million Byelorussians within the Polish State had no desire to fight for task-masters whom they hated. In Moscow they had no illusions on this point.

Pravda on September 14, 1939, stated: "It was impossible to create in Poland that internal unity and consolidation of the forces of a multi-national State which alone could give rise to a mighty wave of patriotism, and which would have inspired the Polish army (within which there were not only Poles but also Byelorussians and Ukrainians) to make a united powerful effort to repulse the enemy. The national minorities of Poland did not and could not become a reliable support of the State regime. A multi-national State which is not consolidated by ties of friendship and equality between the nations inhabiting it but which, on the contrary, is based on the oppression and inequality of the national minorities cannot form a strong military force."

What was the Soviet Government to do in these circumstances? They took the only course which honour and humanity urgently dictated. Early in the morning of September 17, 1939, the Soviet Government handed the following Note to the Polish Ambassador in Moscow:

Mr. Ambassador, the Polish-German war had revealed the internal insolvency of the Polish State. In ten days of hostilities Poland had lost all her industrial regions and cultural centres. Warsaw, as the capital of Poland, no longer exists. The Polish Government has fallen to pieces and shows no sign of life. This means that the Polish State and its Government have virtually ceased to exist; the treaties concluded between the U.S.S.R. and Poland have thereby ceased to operate.

Abandoned to her fate and left without leadership Poland has become a fertile field for any accidental and unexpected contingency which may create a menace to the U.S.S.R. Hence while it was hitherto neutral, the Soviet Government can no longer maintain a neutral attitude towards these facts, nor can the Soviet Government remain indifferent when its blood brothers—Ukrainians and Byelorussians—inhabiting Polish territory, having been abandoned to their fate, are left without protection.

In view of this state of affairs the Soviet Government has instructed the Higher Command of the Red Army to order troops to cross the frontier and take under their protection the lives and property of the population of Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia.

M. Molotov, in a broadcast to the Soviet peoples, among other things stated: "The Soviet Government has instructed the Higher Command of the Red Army to order troops to cross the frontier and take under their protection the lives and property of the populations of Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia."

The Polish Ambassador refused to accept the Note, but nevertheless agreed to inform his Government of its contents.

The following Note was transmitted to the diplomatic representatives in Moscow, of Germany, Italy, Iran, China, Japan, Great Britain, France, Afghanistan, U.S.A., Turkey, Finland, Bulgaria, Latvia, Mongolian People's Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Sweden, Greece, Belgium, Rumania, Tuva People's Republic, Lithuania, Norway and Hungary:

Mr. Ambassador, in transmitting to you the enclosed copy of Note of the Soviet Government of September 17, 1939, to the Polish Ambassador in Moscow, I have the honour, on instructions of my Government, to inform you that the U.S.S.R. will pursue a policy of neutrality in the relations between the U.S.S.R. and [the respective country to which the Note was addressed].

The same morning Soviet troops crossed the frontier and marched into Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia. According to most reports from the spot, the Soviet troops met with practically no resistance and were welcomed by the Ukrainian and Byelorussian population.

By midday, September 18th, the Red Army had actually advanced some 90 miles west of the pre-war (1939) Soviet-Polish frontier.

The question was at once asked abroad, why had the U.S.S.R. marched into Poland? There is no need to seek deeper than the reasons given by the Soviet Government and the obvious facts of the situation. The virtual flight of the Polish Government from Poland and the collapse of the Polish defence had placed the whole of Poland at the mercy of the German Nazis. The U.S.S.R. simply could not stand by and see Germany overrun the Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia—unjustly and forcibly filched from Soviet Russia by the Poles in 1920-21.

That the Soviet occupation of these provinces was not the result of any previous understanding between the German and Soviet Governments is borne out by, amongst other facts, the following report of the *News Chronicle* New York correspondent:

Gedye, of the *New York Times*, experienced correspondent in Moscow reports that authoritative British circles there are convinced that the Russian move into Poland was not arranged when Ribbentrop signed the pact, as Berlin is now implying.

It is believed that Ribbentrop promised that the Nazis would not go beyond the line running through Brest-Litovsk and Lwow, and that Stalin's mistrust of his new friends caused him to act as soon as he saw the German army nearing the line.

He is believed not to have notified the Germans of his intention to occupy White Russian and Ukrainian areas until after his secret mobilisation of reserves was completed.

Germans then had to put on the best possible face and pretend the move was made with their approval.

This story is borne out by earlier messages from Berlin which contrived, despite the censorship, to show that the Germans were baffled by the fragmentary news they got of the Russian mobilisation.¹

It will be recalled that Gedye is the author of that well-known book, *Fallen Bastions*.

The Rotterdam correspondent of *The Times* [September 20, 1939] also declared: "Reports from Berlin make it clear that no agreement had previously been reached between Germany and Russia about the partition of Poland."

Although the march of the Soviet Troops into Poland was at first grossly misunderstood and vehemently and bitterly attacked in the British press, nevertheless many of the correspondents were quick to recognize the realities of the situation which had given rise to the Soviet action, and to stress that there was no small measure of justification for it.

Mr. George Bernard Shaw realized clearly the real significance of what had taken and was taking place. In a characteristic but eminently pertinent letter to *The Times* he stated:

We have encouraged Poland to fight by our pledge to support her; and, we have encouraged ourselves by silly reports that the Polish army was unbroken and that the Poles were performing prodigies of valour. The truth as we now have to admit, and as M. Molotov notes, is that our support has so entirely failed that the Polish resistance has been wiped out, and with it the Polish army and the Polish Government, leaving Poland derelict to be picked up and put on by Herr Hitler as a shepherd putteth on his garment.

At this point, we being helpless, Mr. Stalin steps in and says, "Not quite. If the Ukraine and White Russia are going begging, Russia will occupy them,

¹ *News Chronicle*, September 20, 1939.

Hitler or no Hitler," No sooner said than done. The Red Army is in occupation, Mr. Stalin, who was very explicit as to his objection to be made a cat's paw to take our chestnuts off the fire, has no objection whatever to using Herr Hitler as a cat's paw. The unfortunate Fuhrer is compelled to disgorge half his booty and to face yet another army saying: "Thus far and no farther."

And instead of giving three cheers for Stalin we are shrieking that all is lost.¹

Meanwhile, the collapse of the Polish fighting forces and the speed and equipment of the Red Army were producing profound impressions in the Balkan capitals and in Berlin. *The Times* correspondent cabled from Bucharest, September 21, 1939:

As the last remnants of the Polish army are filtering down towards central Rumania and Hungary, the Balkan and Danubian countries are busily estimating the significance to them of the Polish debacle. Let it be said immediately that the crushing defeat of Poland has made the most profound impression in every Balkan and Danubian land, including even Turkey. But the most important impression has been created by the dramatic intervention of Russia—an impression which may partly be held to counter the effects of the Polish defeat as seen from the German point of view.²

On the following day, the Helsinki correspondent of the same journal cabled:

Finnish correspondents report that Berlin is surprised by the achievements of the Red Army. It is added that Berlin has ceased talking of a settlement on the Brest-Litovsk model, and the opinion is heard that Germany will be required to accept a line farther west than that originally contemplated.³

And the same issue of *The Times* contained a long article by a special correspondent entitled "Germany in the East," in the course of which he wrote:

But once Poland was defeated and over-run by the Germans, Russia could not let the White Russian and Ukrainian provinces fall into the hands of the Nazis, who would have formed them into separate puppet States, a menace to Russia.

Russia knows well that were Hitler to defeat the Western Powers, or merely attain an inconclusive peace with them, his programme for German puppet States in White Russia and the Ukraine would quickly revive, and Russia would be his next victim. Hitler, on the other hand, is quite aware that if he is defeated by the Western Powers, Stalin will neither mourn nor succour him.⁴

¹ *The Times*, September 20, 1939.

² *Ibid.*, September 22, 1939.

³ *Ibid.*, September 23, 1939.

⁴ *Ibid.*

Meanwhile negotiations were taking place in Moscow between the representatives of the Soviet and German Governments.

The bargaining no doubt was hard, but the results were quick. A joint Soviet-German communique was issued on the night of September 22, 1939, stating:

The Governments of Germany and the U.S.S.R. have established a demarcation line between the German and Soviet armies which passes along the River Pissa, then along the Narev up to its confluence with the River Bug, then along the Bug up to its confluence with the River Vistula, then along the Vistula up to the mouth of the River San, and then along the San up to its source.

A glance at the map will show that this new line was in parts considerably to the west of the Curzon Line.¹

The Soviet Forces not only brought freedom to the local populations from Nazi brutality, but also liberation from Polish landlords.

The Moscow correspondent of the *Daily Herald*, September 19, 1939, reporting the entry of Soviet troops into Western Byelorussia and the Western Ukraine declared: "The atmosphere seems to have resembled that of Russian villages in the revolutionary days of 1917, when the peasants seized the estates and innocently expected the Soviets to allow them to keep the land."

We would only stress that the expectations of the Soviet peasants—whether "innocent" or not—have been decidedly realized in the U.S.S.R. The lands of the landlords and kulaks have certainly been kept by the peasant masses and are being cultivated by them for their own and the whole country's benefit.

In a message from the same correspondent, published in the *Daily Herald* September 22, 1939, we read:

Peasant committees are now supervising the division of landlords' estates in some districts of the Polish Ukraine and White Russia.

Land and implements have already been shared out in certain places.

The Soviet troops also brought the hitherto oppressed peoples culture. The *Daily Herald* correspondent, for instance, stated:

Schools using the White Russian language are to be opened soon. Teachers are already being trained.

Ukrainian workers are reported to be taking over control of factories and electing management committees.

¹ See Map IV.

Soviets composed of representatives of all the nationalities—White Russians, Ukrainians, Jews and Poles—were set up.

In the course of a report of events from the Eastern front in the *Daily Telegraph*, it was stated:

A striking example of the new Soviet regime in Eastern Poland is furnished by the town of Bartshevo, where the local committee which replaced the town council consists of two *landless peasants, a carpenter and a labourer.* (Our italics.)

Inventories of the property of the former landlords are being taken, and it has been announced that this property will be divided among the peasantry.¹

Similarly *The Times* correspondent from the Lithuanian border declared:

The new Soviet order is now functioning almost completely at Vilna, Baranowicze, and other towns in western White Russia. Police who had remained at their posts were disarmed, some being arrested, and were succeeded by "workers" guards.²

In earlier pages we have referred to the oppression of the native non-Polish masses by the Polish Government and landlords, but it may be interesting to give here the testimony of one whose sympathies are quite evidently with the Polish squires and governing classes generally. "A correspondent" in the course of a long article entitled *The Red Flag Advances* in *The Times*, September 26, 1939, declared:

In the former Russian and Austrian territories of Poland the agrarian question was a burning one, and the Poles have failed to solve it by thorough-going agrarian reform. One great obstacle was that Polish domination beyond the Curzon Line was mainly based on the Polish ownership of the big landed estates.

He proceeded:

In these eastern provinces the relations between manor house and village were tense, even before the last war; and they have become much tenser in the last twenty years. The Russian armies now entering these provinces need little encouragement from Moscow, Kiev or Minsk to make the White Russian and Ukrainian peasants seize the estates of the Polish big, or merely substantial, landowners, who must be deemed lucky if they escaped with their lives. Probably their Polish officials and retainers, the Catholic clergy, and a good many of the Polish colonists planted in these territories in the last twenty years have also fled or are in danger.

¹ *Daily Telegraph*, September 23, 1939. ² *The Times*, September 25, 1939.

As a result of further negotiations conducted in Moscow on September 27 and 28, 1939, an agreement was reached and signed on the question of the new frontiers. As already mentioned and as can be seen from Map No. IV line this was in parts to the west of the Curzon Line.

Two things emerged clearly from the Soviet-German frontier agreement; firstly, the U.S.S.R. was not anxious to absorb other people's territory—she contented herself with incorporating into the Soviet Byelorussian and Ukrainian Republics respectively, the clearly Byelorussian and Ukrainian territory which should never have been torn from her. As the Moscow correspondent of *The Times* rightly said:

M. Stalin is withdrawing his forces from the purely Polish territory to a roughly ethnographic frontier. That means that only the Ukrainians and White Russians are being taken into the Soviet Union, and it is argued that the Allies, when victorious, would be unlikely to insist on the reincorporation of these peoples in the new Polish State. The Soviet withdrawal could, therefore, be a cautious move by Stalin in order to avoid unnecessary complications.¹

In the course of its leading article in the same issue, *The Times* stated: "It is to be noted, however, that the latest line of partition restricts the Russian share of ethnic Poland. Russia takes over in the main the White Russians and Ukrainians."

Similarly, the diplomatic correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* declared:

By fixing its new western frontier on the line indicated in the statement issued from Moscow the Soviet Government appears to claim that it has done no more than to reclaim those territories east of the "Curzon Line" which were captured from Russia by Poland in 1920 and annexed to the re-created Polish State under the Treaty of Riga in 1921.²

Winston Churchill then Secretary of State for War, was quick to grasp—though not correct in all details—the significance and potentialities of the Soviet Union's action. In the course of a broadcast speech on October 1, 1939, he declared:

What is the second event of this first month? It is, of course, the assertion of the power of Russia. Russia has pursued a cold policy of self-interest. We could have wished that the Russian armies should be standing on their present line as the friends and allies of Poland, instead of invaders. But that the Russian

¹ *The Times*, September 30, 1939. ² *Daily Telegraph*, September 30, 1939.

armies should stand on this line was clearly necessary for the safety of Russia against the Nazi menace. . . .

I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in mystery inside an enigma; but perhaps there is a key. That key is Russian national interest. It cannot be in accordance with the interest or safety of Russia that Nazi Germany should plant itself upon the shores of the Black Sea, or that it should over-run the Balkan States and subjugate the Slavonic peoples of South-Eastern Europe. That would be contrary to the historic life-interests of Russia.

But here these interests of Russia fall into the same channel as the interests of Britain and France. None of these three Powers can afford to see Rumania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and, above all, Turkey, put under the German heel . . .

Through the fog of confusion and uncertainty we may discern quite plainly the community of interests which exists between England, France, and Russia to prevent the Nazis carrying the flames of war into the Balkans and Turkey.

This obvious and lucid statement requires no comment. Before proceeding further the question of Vilna deserves special mention. When the Soviet troops marched into Western Byelorussia and Western Ukraine, September 17, 1939, they of course, also occupied the Vilna region and the town of Vilna. Had the Power which occupied this province and town been any other than the Soviet Union, it is practically a certainty that in view of the overwhelming strength of the U.S.S.R. as compared with Lithuania, these territories would have remained in the possession of the occupying Power.

But the U.S.S.R. always having recognized the right of Lithuania to the Vilna region and the town of Vilna (which Lithuania had always looked upon as her rightful and historic capital) did not change her view when she was in a position to retain them for herself. Accordingly Article I of the Soviet-Lithuanian Treaty¹ read: "For the purpose of consolidating the friendship between the U.S.S.R. and Lithuania, the city of Vilna and Vilna Province are transferred by the Soviet Union to the Lithuanian Republic and included in the territory of the Lithuanian State."

The small State of Lithuania with a population of only 2,500,000, thus received an additional population of 550,000 souls settled in a territory which included, in addition to the town of Vilna, also some fifty-seven smaller towns, one hundred villages, over two hundred miles of railway and over four hundred square miles of forest land. Under these circumstances we can well believe the reports of the joy with which the Soviet-Lithuanian Treaty was greeted in Lithuania. Thus *The Times* Riga correspondent reported:

¹ Signed October 10, 1939.

The acquisition of Vilna, the name of which has in the course of twenty years become for Lithuanians sacred like that of Mecca for the Moslems or Jerusalem for the Jews, has produced unexampled enthusiasm in Kaunas to-day, where the schools were closed and houses adorned with flags, while strangers kissed each other and danced in the streets. Old people capered like children, forgetting their age and infirmities.¹

Following the occupation of Western Byelorussia and the Western Ukraine by the Soviet Forces, provisional, urban and rural administrations and local committees were formed. In all cases the various nationalities were placed on a complete political and economic equality and the provisional governments and Soviets or committees consisted of Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Jews and Poles in accordance with the nationalities inhabiting any given area.

Elections were held throughout Byelorussia and the Western Ukraine on October 22, 1939. Three days later *The Times* correspondent cabled from Moscow—as regards the Western Ukraine: “Roughly 4,780,000 people or 93 per cent of the electorate, went to the polls, and 91 per cent of the voters supported Bolshevik candidates for the national convention,” and with respect to Western Byelorussia: “The results were still better, only two out of the 929 candidates failing to secure election. Nearly 97 per cent of the electorate went to the polls, and about 91 per cent of the 2,700,000 voters supported the candidates.”²

And the same journal in the course of a leader, November 2, 1939, declared:

It must be recognised that White Russia and the Ukraine are a racial part of the Russian family, and the results of the recent elections organised by the Soviet authorities in those provinces may conform pretty closely with the natural feelings of the inhabitants.

M. Molotov, in the course of a report to the Supreme Council on October 31, 1939, dealing with the Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia, stated:

The territory which has passed to the U.S.S.R. is equal in area to a large European state. Thus the area of Western Byelorussia is 108,000 sq. kilometres, and its population is 4,800,000. The area of Western Ukraine is 88,000 sq. kilometres and its population 8,000,000. Hence together the territory of Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia which has passed to us has an area of 196,000 sq. kilometres, and a population of about 13,000,000, of whom

¹ *The Times*, October 12, 1939.

² *Ibid.*, October 26, 1939.

there are more than 7,000,000 Ukrainians, more than 3,000,000 Byelorussians, over 1,000,000 Poles, and over 1,000,000 Jews.

The political significance of these events can scarcely be overrated. All reports from Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia show that the population greeted their liberation from the yoke of the gentry with indescribable enthusiasm, and rapturously hailed this great new victory of the Soviet system. The recent elections to the National Assemblies of Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia, conducted for the first time in the history of those territories on the basis of universal direct equal suffrage and secret ballot, have shown that at least nine-tenths of the population of these regions have long been ready to rejoin the Soviet Union. Decision of the National Assemblies of Lvov and Byelostok with which we are all now familiar, testify to the complete unanimity of the people's representatives on all political questions.

The decision of the National Assemblies to which M. Molotov referred, were requests from these bodies for inclusion in the Ukrainian and Byelorussian Republics respectively, requests which were granted by the Supreme Council of the U.S.S.R. on November 1st and 2nd 1939, respectively. The new western frontiers of the Soviet Union remained unchanged until they were violated by the German attack on the U.S.S.R. on June 22, 1941.

The Polish Government in power at the outbreak of the war in September 1939, had been elected under the terms of the illegal 1935 Constitution. As the Germans swept through the country, the members of the Government fled abroad and some of them reassembled in Paris in the autumn of 1939. What happened next was thus recorded in a Reuter cable from Paris dated November 11, 1939:

The Polish Parliament has been dissolved by a presidential decree appearing in the *Monitor Polski*, the official Polish law journal, to-day. A communique issued by the Polish Embassy here says that the Parliament has been dissolved because it "was not an exact expression of the feeling of the nation, and, secondly, had not taken into consideration modification of the electoral law." None of the Opposition parties was represented in the Parliament.¹

A month later, President Raczkiewicz, acting under Article 79 of the 1935 Constitution which authorized the President in wartime to issue decrees without the consent of Parliament, called into being the Polish National Council (*Rada Narodowa*). It was decided that the National Council should serve as a substitute for Parliament and that all groups and parties, including the opposition parties, should be represented. The opposition parties, i.e. the Radical Peasant Party,

¹ *Manchester Guardian*, November 13, 1939.

the Socialist Party, etc., decided to collaborate. The National Council held its first meeting in Paris on January 23, 1940. It is piquant to quote two extracts from the report which appeared in *The Times* on the following day respecting what was said at the first meeting:

He [Paderewski] felt sure that none of those present desired a return simply of the situation existing before May, 1926. Also, although it might be held that the Polish Governments of the past 13 years were greatly responsible for the fate that had befallen Poland, the Governments that went before them were not ideal . . .

General Sikorski said that the cause of Poland's rapid defeat lay in a system of government divorced from the nation.¹

To put it mildly, even the most ardent apologist for the emigré Polish Government could hardly claim that the Polish National Council had established its claim to speak for the Polish people.

After the collapse of France in June 1940, the "Polish Government" had to seek a new home and they gladly accepted the British offer of hospitality. The President, the Prime Minister, the Commander-in-Chief, and the members of the Cabinet arrived in England on June 22, 1940. The emigré Polish Government were the guests of the British Government on British soil, a state of affairs which carried with it very definite obligations of restraint in accordance with the foreign policy pursued by His Majesty's Government.

Ten days earlier, June 12, 1940, Sir Stafford Cripps, M.P., arrived in Moscow, as British Ambassador on a special mission to improve British-Soviet relations. This was common knowledge and was undoubtedly known to the emigré Polish Government. Yet the Polish Foreign Minister, M. Zaleski, in the last week of July 1940, in the course of a debate of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Polish National Council, made a violent and abusive attack on the Soviet Government. That was bad, but worse was to follow.

On August 21, 1940, Mr. Butler (Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs) informed the House of Commons that the Polish Government had left "His Majesty's Government in no doubt" that they considered themselves in a state of war with the Soviet Union, and in reply to a supplementary question Mr. Butler added: "the hon. member . . . knows quite well that it is the desire of His Majesty's Government to improve relations with the Soviet Union."²

Many people when they read the Under Foreign Secretary's reply

¹ *The Times*, November 24, 1940.

² *Hansard*, August 21, 1940, Col. 1279.

must have asked themselves what the Poles were aiming at. They had not long to wait for an answer. The Polish official newspaper *Dziennik Polski* in its issue November 14, 1940, contained the following sensational statement:

The area that belonged at different times to the Polish State extends from the Baltic to the Black Sea and from the river Oder to the rivers Dnieper and Dvina . . . Everywhere in this huge area traces of Polish culture are to be found, testimony to the lasting bonds with Poland and her civilisation. Pre-war Poland was able only partially to unite the lands of her cultural and living space. . . . After this war, with God's help, we shall rebuild Poland, we must give her more appropriate and adequate frontiers compatible with her historic mission. We must firmly take under our rule the Baltic Sea with East Prussia; we must collaborate with the Czech and Slovak politicians; we must find the way to get the people of Eastern Poland to fight Moscow's barbarism and the scourge of Bolshevism.

In other words, the Polish Government were hoping at the end of the war to annex enormous areas of Soviet territory.

Naturally this could only be achieved in the event of war with the Soviet Union and the defeat of that State by the Allied Governments. The aims of the Polish Government were now clear. They hoped to bring about war between, on the one hand, Great Britain (then struggling for her very life) and her Allies, and on the other hand the Soviet Union, and that under the subsequent Peace Treaty, the Russian territories just referred to would be ceded to Poland. "Mad!" the reader will exclaim. Yes, absolutely mad! But it was for this that the emigré Polish Government in London in the fall of 1940 was hoping and plotting.

Right up to the date of the German attack on the U.S.S.R., June 22, 1941, the Polish Government in London did their utmost to sow distrust between the British and Soviet Governments. Even as late as May 19, 1941, the Polish Prime Minister, General Sikorski, told a number of journalists that "Stalin would continue to surrender to Hitler and might even become a Russian Quisling!"¹

Fortunately for the world at large, including Poland, the nefarious efforts of the Polish Government in London ended in complete failure.

¹ *Manchester Guardian*, May 21, 1941.

Chapter XII

AFTER NAZI GERMANY'S ATTACK ON THE U.S.S.R.

IMMEDIATELY AFTER GERMANY'S ATTACK on the U.S.S.R. the need to settle Russo-Polish differences was generally recognized. The British Government acted as mediator and an Agreement was concluded in London, July 30, 1941, between the Governments of the U.S.S.R. and Poland. Under the terms of the Treaty diplomatic relations were resumed; mutual aid was pledged in the war against Germany; a Polish army was to be formed on the territory of the U.S.S.R. and an amnesty was to be granted to Polish citizens on the territory of the U.S.S.R.

As to frontiers—the apposite article read: "The Government of the U.S.S.R. recognized the Soviet-German treaties of 1939 as to territorial changes in Poland as having lost their validity," but there was no clause in the instrument under which the Soviet Union recognized the frontiers of the Treaty of Riga.

In plain language the question of frontiers was left until Germany was defeated. That was how the British press interpreted the Treaty. To quote a typical comment: "Henceforward Russia regards the Soviet-German Treaties of 1939 as to territorial changes in Poland as having lost their validity, and therefore presumably renounces the gains she made in virtue of them. On the other hand, the determination of the new frontiers is wisely left over until the end of the war."¹

Mr. Eden, the Foreign Secretary, after announcing the signature of the Agreement to the House of Commons, in reply to a supplementary question, stated: "There is as I said no guarantee of frontiers." The British Government again as in the past gave no guarantee of the frontiers of the Treaty of Riga, 1921.

General Sikorsky, the then Polish Prime Minister, was unfortunately surrounded by many Fascists of the Pilsudski persuasion and probably in order to keep the support of these gentry, in the course of a broadcast, July 31, 1941, he stated: "The present agreement only provisionally regulates disputes which have mutually divided us for centuries. But it does not permit even of the suggestion that the 1939 frontiers of the Polish State could ever be in question. It does not allow of any idea that Poland has resigned anything."²

The Soviet Government strongly objected to this interpretation

¹ *Daily Telegraph*, July 31, 1941.

² *The Times*, August, 1, 1941.

and *Izvestia* at once replied: "The Polish-Russian frontiers cannot be regarded as immutable. Britain is not guaranteeing the Polish frontiers."

Despite this somewhat inauspicious start, a Soviet-Polish Military Agreement was signed in Moscow, August, 15 1941, providing in detail for the formation of a Polish Army in the Soviet Union, and this was followed by the signature in Moscow, December 4, 1941, of a declaration of friendship and mutual assistance between the two countries.

The instrument read:

The Government of the Soviet Union and the Government of the Polish Republic, motivated by a spirit of friendly agreement and military co-operation, declare:

1. German Hitlerite Imperialism is the most evil enemy of mankind. It is impossible to make any compromise with it. Both Governments, together with Great Britain and other allies, and with the support of the United States of America, will continue the war until complete victory and the final destruction of the German invaders.

2. In putting into operation the agreement signed in July 1941, both Governments will lend each other full military aid during the war. The forces of the Polish Government on Soviet territory will conduct the fight against the German robbers shoulder to shoulder with the Soviet forces. In peace time the basis of mutual relations will be good-neighbourly collaboration, friendship, and the carrying out of obligations agreed upon.

3. After the victorious termination of the war and the suitable punishment of the German criminals, the task of the Allied governments will be to guarantee a just and enduring peace. This can only be achieved by a new organisation of international relations based on an enduring alliance between the democratic countries. In the creation of such an organisation a vital condition will be respect for international law supported by the collective armed forces of all Allied countries. Only under such conditions can the Europe destroyed by the German barbarians be resurrected and a guarantee given that the catastrophe now occurring in Europe will not be repeated.

Plenipotentiary of the Soviet Government.

J. V. STALIN.

For the Government of the Polish Republic.

GENERAL SIKORSKY.

Moscow. 4.12.1941.

On his return to Great Britain, General Sikorsky expressed himself as very pleased with his visit to Moscow: "He returns very well

satisfied with all the results" wrote the Diplomatic Correspondent of *The Times*. "The Soviet Government promised all speedy help in establishing a Polish army in Russia, and M. Stalin showed in the clearest way that he desired to see a strong and independent Poland established after the war. Before leaving Russia General Sikorsky visited the Polish camps east of Moscow."¹

The Polish army referred to in the previous paragraph—despite the definite pledge to the Soviet Government and the financial and other aid rendered by the Soviet authorities—never took the field on Russian soil side by side with the Red Army. The Polish Command promised that the army would be ready by October 1, 1941, but when that date was reached, the Polish Command said that it was not yet ready. They continued to make excuse after excuse, and finally they asked permission to evacuate their Forces to Iran.

The Soviet authorities agreed and the evacuation was effected in March and August 1942. The reason for the Polish action will appear as the story unfolds; they hoped to use these forces and others against the U.S.S.R. after the defeat of Germany.

On May 6, 1943, A. Y. Vyshinsky made a lengthy statement to representatives of the British and American press in Moscow regarding the course of Soviet-Polish relations from July 1941. This statement will be found in full in appendix No. 1 and No. 2.

At the same time the mischief-makers within the Polish Government in London continued their activities, and on December 6, 1942, the Polish National Council sent a statement to the press declaring: "In the question of our eastern frontiers the National Council holds to the basis of the Treaty of Riga."² This was underlined by General Sikorsky who in a speech stated: "I obtained the recognition of the Polish eastern frontiers in 1923. I represent that Poland which entered the war in 1939 in full integrity and I hope that Poland will emerge from this war, after victory, greater and stronger."³

Why were these declarations made at this particular time? We think the explanation is not difficult to discover. In December 1942, despite the Soviet firm stand before Stalingrad and their successes on other parts of the Eastern Front, many observers thought that the U.S.S.R. would be exhausted at the end of the war and the Polish Government in London considered the time opportune to stake out their claims once again. This was not all—Polish papers published in

¹ *The Times*, January 7, 1942.

² *News Chronicle*, December 7, 1942.

³ *Ibid.*, December 24, 1942.

London and New York were writing such nonsense as "Poland's holy rights to her unchanging Eastern boundaries" and of her "rights on the Dnieper and the Black Sea." These gentry thought they could play the same game as in 1919 and seize Russian territory when Russia was temporarily weak. Their vapourings were of course noted in the U.S.S.R. and especially in the Ukraine and the well-known political leader and playwright, Alexander Korneichuk, issued a serious warning. He wrote:

There appears to be at the present time a big group of Polish emigrants in England and America who not only do not think about the sufferings and tortures of the Polish people, but try in every possible way to shake the united front of freedom-loving peoples. There, in comfortable London offices, Polish politicians are looking out on the blood-soaked Ukrainian land and dreaming again of tearing off the western districts of the Ukraine and again "landlordise" the villages.

They overlook the fact that there is a strong and talented Ukrainian people of 40,000,000 who, during the years of Soviet power, have formed a brilliant State where a single factory has turned out more cast-iron than the whole of Poland.

He concluded: "The fate of the Ukrainian people and its State and land is and will be decided by the Ukrainian people."

True the Polish Government in London issued a declaration repudiating their wild men, but it was no secret at the time that members of this Government had themselves had a hand in the preparation of the articles to which we have referred. Moreover, this declaration added that the Polish Government "has from the moment of the conclusion of the Polish-Soviet Treaty of July 30, 1941, maintained the unchangeable attitude that as far as the question of frontiers between Poland and Soviet Russia is concerned the *status quo* previous to September 1, 1939, is in force."¹

Since the Polish Government in London had been staking out its claims to post-war frontiers, the Soviet Government had no alternative but to reply and in a statement dated March 2, 1943, they claimed all territories east of the Curzon Line as Soviet territories, and declared:

Even the famous British Minister, Lord Curzon, despite his unfriendly attitude towards the U.S.S.R., understood that Poland had no claim to Ukrainian and Byelorussian lands, while the Polish ruling circles up to the present time are unwilling to treat this problem with understanding . . .

¹ *Manchester Guardian*, February 26, 1943.

Polish ruling circles have learned nothing, if they still attempt to encroach on Ukrainian and Byelorussian lands, and thus cultivate enmity between the Polish people and the peoples of the Ukraine and Byelorussia, because the pursuit of such a policy by the Polish ruling circles weakens Poland herself in the first place, and breaks up the united front of the Slav peoples in the struggle against German invasion.

The statement of the Polish Government shows that in this matter the present Polish ruling circles do not reflect the true attitude of the Polish people, whose interests in the struggle for the liberation of their country and the revival of a strong and powerful Poland are indissolubly bound up with the cause of strengthening in every way the mutual confidence and friendship between them and the fraternal peoples of the Ukraine and Byelorussia, as also with the Russian and other peoples of the U.S.S.R.

The Polish rejoinder came on March 4, 1943:

The declaration of the Polish Government of February 25, 1943, backed unanimously by the entire Polish nation, was not intended to produce controversy which would be so harmful at the present moment. It only stated the indisputable Polish rights to these territories, in which the Polish nation will continue to live in harmony with its Ukrainian and White Russian fellow-country-men in accordance with the principles proclaimed by the Polish Government.¹

This sounds very like an admission that the majority of the inhabitants east of the Curzon Line were Byelorussians and Ukrainians. As for "harmony" with their "Ukrainian and White Russian fellow-country-men," it is only necessary to point out that Polish rule in these territories had never been characterized by harmony but by constant conflict.

Meanwhile, a group of Poles resident in the U.S.S.R. began the publication of a new Polish journal *Free Poland* which stated in its first issue: "We have no right to the lands of the Ukraine and White Russia, where Poles are in the minority. We want a free, independent Poland, on good terms with White Russia and the Ukraine."

In public, General Sikorsky, the Prime Minister, never missed an opportunity to assert that Poland must receive back the frontiers as laid down in the Treaty of Riga with the result that relations between the two Governments steadily worsened. It was in this atmosphere that an episode occurred which led to the severance of diplomatic relations between the two Governments.

We must here briefly retrace our steps. Very soon after the German attack on Poland, the Government of the latter accused the German

¹ *The Times*, March 5, 1943.

Government of carrying out wholesale atrocities against the Polish people. *The Times* reviewing "The German New Order in Poland," compiled by the Polish Ministry of Information and published in January, 1942, stated:

The book is divided into nine parts. The first is "Persecutions, Murders, and Expulsions." The outside world has heard much of German terrorism, but only when the complete picture is given can the full scope of the terrorism be comprehended. There is no brutality that man can inflict on man or woman or child that is not chronicled in these pages. Evidence is given about massacres, individual shootings, imprisonment, and starvation. Over 80,000 Polish men, women and children have been killed in or near their homes since the fighting was over and the "new order" was established. Many thousands more have died in the concentration camps. Several pages are taken up with quotations from the German Press which announce executions from day to day.¹

If that ghastly picture is true to fact, and it decidedly is, the Hitlerites were capable of any crimes and if profitable to themselves, of attributing these crimes to others.

It is necessary to bear these facts in mind in view of what follows. In April 1943, the German Government stated that it had found a number of mass graves at Katyn (near Smolensk) containing the corpses of ten thousand Polish officers who had been murdered in February and March 1940, by the Soviet authorities prior to Germany's attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941.

Did the Polish Government believe this allegation? We doubt it very strongly. If they had they would have consulted the Soviet and Allied Governments before taking any action. Instead of this they immediately asked the International Red Cross to investigate the matter. How on earth could an impartial investigation be carried out whilst German troops were in occupation of the territory? Patently impossible!

The Polish request to the International Red Cross was meant to convey to the world that the Polish Government were persuaded that at least a *prima facie* case had been made out against the Soviet Government. Yet in their statement to the press, April 17, 1943, the Polish Cabinet, referring to German crimes against Polish officers, among other things declared:

The Polish Government recalls such facts as: The removal of Polish officers from prisoner-of-war camps in the Reich and the subsequent shooting of them for political offences alleged to have been committed before the war; mass

¹ *The Times*, January 15, 1942.

arrests of reserve officers subsequently deported to concentration camps, to die a slow death. From Cracow and the neighbouring district alone 6,000 were deported in June 1942.¹

Yet the Polish Government ostensibly would have had the world believe that they were prepared to entertain seriously a charge made by the Nazi Government against an Allied Government, in this case the Soviet Government. In our judgment, the Polish Government did not believe this monstrous accusation. They seized on it as a means of blackmailing the Soviet Government: "Promise us our pre-war (1939) frontiers and we will say that we are convinced that there is no truth in the Nazi allegation." The Polish Government in London made the mistake of their lives.

The Soviet Government replied at once. On April 18, 1943, they indignantly denied the accusation, charged the Germans with having themselves committed the murders and Moscow followed this up on April 25, 1943, by the only honourable step open to them, viz., by severing diplomatic relations with the Polish Government in London.

As M. Molotov's Note to M. Romer, the Polish Ambassador in Moscow, is so important, we quote it here in full:

Mr. Ambassador, on behalf of the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics I have the honour to notify the Polish Government of the following:

The Soviet Government considers the recent behaviour of the Polish Government with regard to the U.S.S.R., as entirely abnormal, and violating all regulations and standards of relations between two Allied States. The slanderous campaign hostile to the Soviet Union launched by the German Fascists in connection with the murder of the Polish officers, which they themselves committed in the Smolensk area on territory occupied by German troops, was at once taken up by the Polish Government, and is being fanned in every way by the Polish Official Press.

Far from offering a rebuff to the vile Fascist slander of the U.S.S.R., the Polish Government did not even find it necessary to address to the Soviet Government any inquiry or request for an explanation on this subject.

Having committed a monstrous crime against the Polish officers, the Hitlerite authorities are now staging a farcical investigation, and for this they have made use of certain Polish pro-Fascist elements whom they themselves selected in Occupied Poland, where everything is under Hitler's heel, and where no honest Pole can openly have his say.

For the "investigation," both the Polish Government and the Hitlerite Government invited the International Red Cross, which is compelled, in

¹ *The Times*, April 19, 1943.

conditions of a terroristic regime, with its gallows and mass extermination of the peaceful population, to take part in this investigation farce staged by Hitler. Clearly such an "investigation," conducted behind the back of the Soviet Government, cannot evoke the confidence of people possessing any degree of honesty.

The fact that the hostile campaign against the Soviet Union commenced simultaneously in the German and Polish press, and was conducted along the same lines, leaves no doubt as to the existence of contact and accord in carrying out this hostile campaign between the enemy of the Allies—Hitler—and the Polish Government.

While the peoples of the Soviet Union, bleeding profusely in a hard struggle against Hitlerite Germany, are straining every effort for the defeat of the common enemy of the Russian and Polish peoples, and of all freedom-loving democratic countries, the Polish Government, to please Hitler's tyranny, has dealt a treacherous blow to the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Government is aware that this hostile campaign against the Soviet Union is being undertaken by the Polish Government in order to exert pressure upon the Soviet Government by making use of the slanderous Hitlerite fake for the purpose of wresting from it territorial concessions at the expense of the interests of the Soviet Ukraine, Soviet Byelorussia and Soviet Lithuania.

All these circumstances compel the Soviet Government to recognize that the present Government of Poland, having slid on to the path of accord with Hitler's Government, has actually discontinued allied relations with the U.S.S.R., and has adopted a hostile attitude towards the Soviet Union.

On the strength of the above, the Soviet Government has decided to sever relations with the Polish Government.

Please accept, Mr. Ambassador, the assurance of my very high esteem.

The British press, while regretting the action of the Soviet Government in breaking off diplomatic relations with the Polish Government, told the Poles in unquestionable terms that their conduct was indefensible. "We do not intend to enter into any argument about the details of the dispute," declared the *Evening Standard* in a typical comment. "But on two simple counts we believe the Polish Government must be held responsible for the breach. First, they had no right to suppose that a German allegation might contain the truth. Second, they had no right to call for an investigation on territory occupied by the enemy."¹

Mr. A. J. Cummings wrote: "The Polish Government and its Press seized upon it so readily as to suggest that they welcomed the chance to asperse the Soviet Union and to discredit her with her principal Allies."²

¹ April 24, 1943.

² *News Chronicle*, April 27, 1943.

"Surprise," stated *The Times* in a leader, "as well as regret, will be felt that those who have had so much cause to understand the perfidy and ingenuity of the Goebbels propaganda machine should themselves have fallen into the trap laid by it. Poles will hardly have forgotten a volume widely circulated in the first winter of the war which described with every detail of circumstantial evidence, including that of photography, alleged Polish atrocities against the peaceful German inhabitants of Poland."¹

As to the veracity of the German allegations the British Press ridiculed them; "Why should the murderers leave identification papers on the bodies," wrote *The Times* Diplomatic Correspondent, "which were certain to be discovered sooner or later? The Germans themselves have murdered many thousands of Poles, and boasted of it. Are they trying to turn the murder of some of their own victims to their advantage? How is it that their own stories about the discovery differ so widely in content?"²

And as for Washington opinion—the New York correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* cabled: "Diplomatic circles in the United States in touch with the situation assert that the territorial claims of Poland are at the root of the whole trouble. They state that the controversy about the fate of 10,000 Polish officers was started by the Poles as a means of influencing American and British opinion."³

The Polish Government issued a reply to the Soviet Note which made matters worse. It stated that it wanted good relations with the Soviet Government, but it contained no apology for having accepted ("exploited" is perhaps the more apt word), the Nazi lie and reiterated its claim for the frontiers of the Treaty of Riga.

However, the action of the Polish Government in London did not change in the slightest the policy of the Soviet Government towards the Polish people and State. *The Times* correspondent in Moscow, May 3, 1943, sent two questions to Stalin and received a reply by letter on the following day:

(1) Question: Does the Government of the U.S.S.R. desire to see a strong and independent Poland after the defeat of Hitler's Germany?

Answer: Unquestionably, it does.

(2) Question: On what foundations is it your opinion that the relations between Poland and the U.S.S.R. should be based after the war?

Answer: Upon the basis of solid good neighbourly relations and mutual

¹ April 28, 1943.

² Ibid.

³ April 29, 1943.

respect, or, should the Polish people so desire, on the basis of an alliance providing for mutual assistance against the Germans as the chief enemies of the Soviet Union and Poland—With respect.

J. Stalin.¹

"Marshal Stalin's letter to the Moscow Correspondent of *The Times*," wrote the Diplomatic Correspondent of that journal, May 7, 1943, "published yesterday, was reproduced far and wide; and in allied countries it was warmly greeted. The letter was recognized to be a diplomatic document of great significance."

Fortunately for the future of both Poland and Polish-Soviet relations, the many Poles at this time on Soviet territory—who had retreated into the Soviet Union when Poland and the Soviet Union's Western provinces were overrun—established a "Union of Polish Patriots" and in the first week of May 1943, the Soviet Government agreed to the Union's proposal that a Polish Division should be formed on Soviet territory to fight side by side with the Red Army under the command of Colonel Zigmund Berling. This was the genesis of the Polish Army about which we shall learn more in subsequent chapters.

Meanwhile the Polish press in Great Britain—forty-four papers in all—continued its reckless anti-Soviet agitation. They received a stern warning in the House of Commons:

Mr. Leslie asked the Minister of Information whether he is aware that certain Polish newspapers in this country are still quoting German stories about the alleged Smolensk massacres; and whether he will consider stopping the publication of these papers in the interest of unity for the prosecution of the war:

The Minister of Information (Mr. Brendan Bracken): The inquiry into the activities of foreign language newspapers in this country is nearing completion. Meanwhile, the warning I gave last week will, I hope, inculcate a due sense of responsibility in the minds of their editors. If it does not, I think the Ministry of Information will have the approval of the House in taking drastic action against those who abuse the hospitality of this country by attempting to stir up trouble between members of the United Nations.²

This warning, as we shall learn in later pages, had to be followed by drastic action.

Unfortunately General Sikorsky, the Polish Prime Minister, was killed in an aeroplane accident in the first week of July 1943. His untimely end was universally regretted. In the U.S.S.R., they knew how to appreciate both Sikorsky's strength and also his weakness.

¹ *The Times*, May 6, 1943.

² *Hansard*, June 2, 1943, Col. 194.

"A considerable stage in Polish-Soviet relations remains connected with the name of this great Polish statesman and military leader," commented *Izvestia*. "General Sikorsky was one of those who understood and appreciated the full significance of the struggle of the Soviet Union against Nazi Germany for the common cause of all freedom-loving peoples and in particular for the Polish people."

After discussing, *inter alia*, the Soviet-Polish Agreement of July 30, 1941, the conclusion on August 14, 1941, of the Soviet-Polish Agreement for the formation of a Polish army in the U.S.S.R. and the two agreements for the granting of loans by the Soviet Government to the Polish Government for the upkeep of this army and for providing assistance for Polish citizens in the U.S.S.R., the article referred to Sikorsky's visit to Moscow in December 1941, which led to the adoption of a joint declaration on Soviet-Polish friendship and mutual aid, and pointed out that at that time Sikorsky stood for a clear understanding with the U.S.S.R. Unfortunately, other emigré Poles were definitely hostile to this policy.

"General Sikorsky," concluded *Izvestia*, "finally yielded to pressure from those circles in his entourage who desired to continue that policy of hostility towards the Soviet Union pursued by the well-known former Polish Foreign Minister, Beck."¹

Stanislaw Mikolajczyk, leader of the peasant Party, was appointed Prime Minister in succession to Sikorsky, but the change in the premiership—as might have been expected—did not affect the policy of the Polish Government in London *vis-à-vis* the Soviet Government during the second half of 1943.

¹ *Izvestia*, July 9, 1943.

Chapter XIII

RED ARMY BEGINS LIBERATION OF POLAND

IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 1944 there was no improvement in relations between the Soviet Government and the Polish Government in London. It is true that the Polish Prime Minister and some members of his "Government" declared publicly that they wanted normal and friendly relations with the Government of the U.S.S.R., but they invariably added words which meant that they were insisting on their pre-war (1939) frontiers. Whenever Moscow commented, the Kremlin was emphatic that it would not cede any territories east of the Curzon Line.

However, although there was no change in this sphere, important developments took place which weakened, in fact greatly weakened, the pretensions of the Polish "Government" and strengthened the position of the Soviet Government. As already explained, the Soviet Government had always claimed with justice that their territorial claims were based on historical and ethnographical principles, and perhaps slowly but definitely the justice of these demands was recognized in Great Britain.

The question of the frontiers became a very urgent issue early in 1944, because the Red Army crossed the pre-war (1939) frontiers in the first week of January and took over the administration of the newly-liberated regions. In the *Observer* (by no means friendly to the Soviet Union), Mr. D. Martens, in a leading article, sternly warned the Poles what would happen if the disputed territories were returned to them. He wrote:

The Polish Drang in the Ukraine has been frustrated because its agents were only semi-feudal landlords, officials, and administrative settlers. Between 1918 and 1939; a short-sighted and brutal minority policy created a gulf between the mixed nationalities there, a gulf which has been irretrievably widened by the events of this war. Some Ukrainians have collaborated with the Germans; others have joined pro-Soviet guerillas. But both pro-German as well as pro-Soviet Ukrainians turned with equal bitterness against the Poles.¹

Later followed this timely and justified admonition:

¹ January 9, 1944.

For the Poles, most of the eastern borderlands represent a dead asset, to be written off. No "map-dreaming" and references to pre-war status can alter this fact. Quite apart from Russian claims, the re-incorporation of these provinces into Poland now would almost certainly require years of civil war and much bloodshed. Exhausted and ruined as Poland will emerge from its cruel ordeal, it could not shoulder so heavy a burden without detriment to its own interests.¹

As regards the pre-war (1939) frontier line—*The Times* in a leading article, January 8, 1944, stated: "British opinion has never been happy about the equity of this line, which diverged very widely from the carefully-considered recommendations put forward by the competent commission of the Peace Conference of 1919."

The Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, in the course of a war review in the House of Commons, February 22, 1944, stated: "Here I may remind the House that we ourselves have never in the past guaranteed, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, any particular frontier line to Poland. We did not approve of the Polish occupation of Vilna in 1920. The British view in 1919 stands expressed in the so-called Curzon Line which attempted to deal, at any rate partially, with the problem."²

Later he added: "The liberation of Poland may presently be achieved by the Russian armies after these armies have suffered millions of casualties in breaking the German military machine. I cannot feel that the Russian demand for a reassurance about her Western frontiers goes beyond the limits of what is reasonable or just."³

Churchill's statement was fiercely attacked in the Polish press printed in this country, but it was welcomed by the greater part of the British press. A Pole, C. Poznanski, in a letter to the *Manchester Guardian* regarding the Prime Minister's policy in this matter admitted but bewailed that "a large majority of the British papers representing British public opinion has commended the realism of this policy."⁴

The British Prime Minister also in his speech, February 22, 1944, referring to the decisions of the Teheran Conference stated:

I took occasion to raise personally with Marshal Stalin, the question of the future of Poland. I pointed out that it was in fulfilment of our guarantee to Poland that Great Britain declared war upon Nazi Germany and that we had never weakened in our resolve, even in the period when we were all alone, and that the fate of the Polish nation holds a prime place in the thoughts and

¹ *Observer*, January 9, 1944.

³ *Ibid.*

² *Hansard*, February 22, 1944, Cols. 697-8.

⁴ *Manchester Guardian*, March 8, 1944.

policies of His Majesty's Government and of the British Parliament. It was with great pleasure that I heard from Marshal Stalin that he, too, was resolved upon the creation and maintenance of a strong integral independent Poland as one of the leading Powers in Europe. He has several times repeated these declarations in public and I am convinced that they represent the settled policy of the Soviet Union.¹

Later he added: "Marshal Stalin and I also spoke and agreed upon the need for Poland to obtain compensation at the expense of Germany both in the North and in the West."²

We have referred on previous pages to the murder of ten thousand Polish officers at Katyn. When the Soviet Forces recaptured the Smolensk district—the Katyn forest in which the crime was committed is ten miles from the city—the Soviet Government appointed a Special Commission to make an exhaustive investigation. The report was published to the world on January 26, 1944. The investigation demonstrated that the crime could not have been perpetrated by the Soviet authorities. According to the German allegation, the massacre had taken place in March 1940 when Soviet forces were in the area, but documents were found on the bodies bearing the date "1941." British and American correspondents who were invited to inspect the graves and the evidence were convinced as to the real authors of the crime. The following cable typical of many, appeared in the *Daily Express*, January 27, 1944:

Smolensk, Wednesday.

A party of British and American reporters had been conducted to the scene of the most horrible crime of the war—the massacre of 11,000 Polish prisoners in the woods of Katyn, outside Smolensk.

We were shown much of the evidence on which a special Soviet commission has built indisputable proof of German guilt and smashed the German lie that the Russians shot the Poles . . .

In Smolensk we examined the tragic collection of scraps of newspaper, money and other odds and ends taken from the bodies. And that is where we saw the letter of Stanislaus Korhinsky.

He was a Polish prisoner-of-war in Russia and this is what he wrote to his wife, Irina, who lived at 15 Bagetal, Warsaw:

"My dearest Sunbeam: I thank you very much for what you sent me. Mind that you do not forget me. Remember that you are the only thing I have. My dear girl, I think only of you.

¹ *Hansard*, February 22, 1944, Col. 697.

² *Ibid.*

"I think of you always. Write to me often, and don't wait for letters to come from me before you write. I send you kisses, and I love you very much."

Korhinsky is dead, a victim of the "Katyn massacre."

But his letter, found on his body is a silent witness for the Russians.

The Germans claim that the Russians committed the massacre in March 1940.

But Korhinsky's letter is dated June 20, 1941.

(B.U.P. and Reuter.)

The corpses of the Polish officers were reburied by the Soviet authorities with full military honours and a Polish priest conducted the religious service.

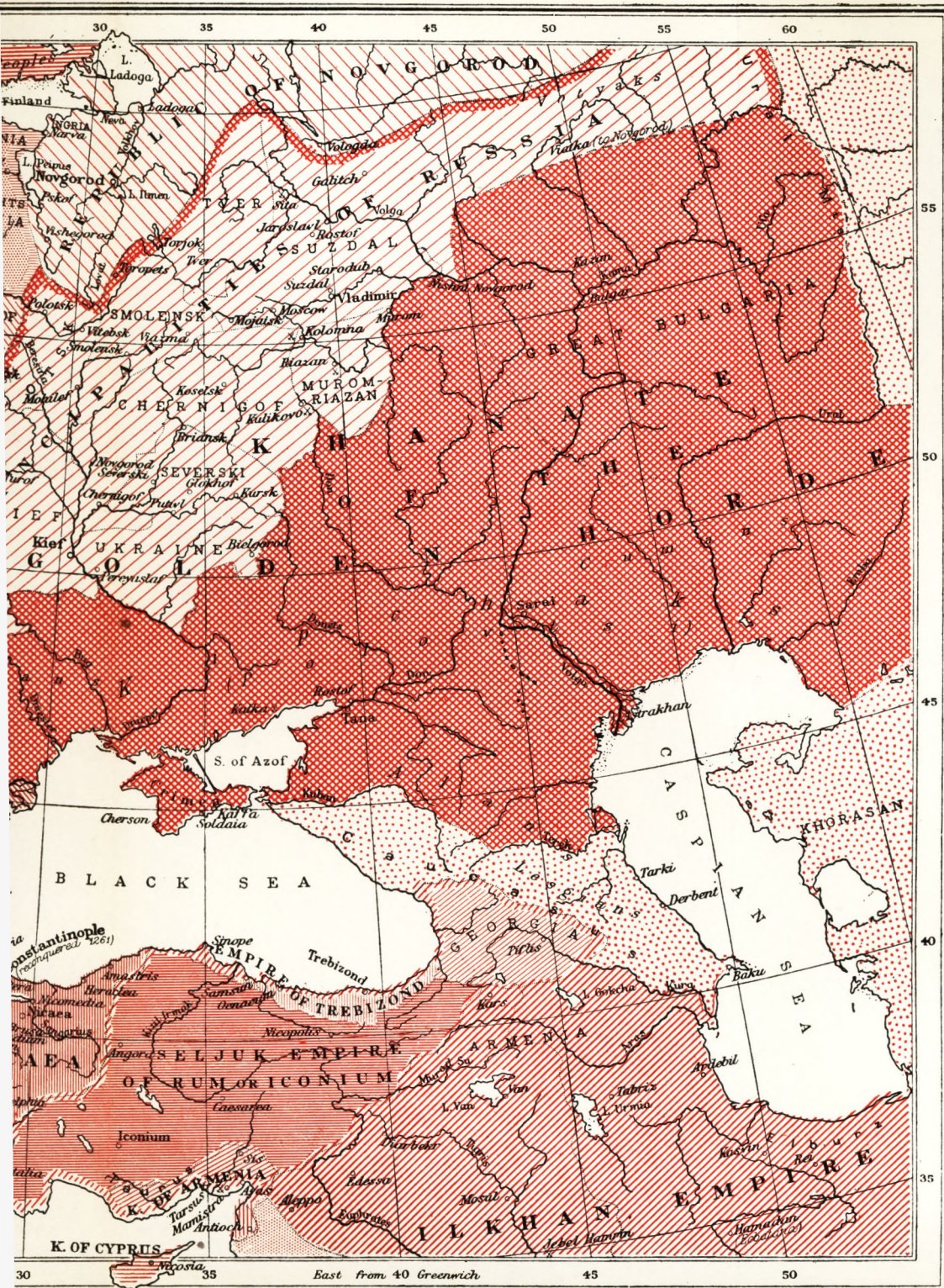
After the publication of the Commission's report, the accusation against the Soviets was dropped both by Germans and Poles, but the Polish Government in London never issued an apology to the Soviet Government.

However there would seem to be no end to the stupidities of the Polish adherents of the emigré Government, resident at this time in Great Britain. One of their papers, the *Mysl Polska*, in February 1944, issued a call for a "New Europe" to be organized around Germany, France, Poland and Italy. Great Britain and Russia were to be eliminated. Two months later the Diplomatic Correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* informed its readers: "The Polish Government in London has decided to invite the exiled Governments of German-occupied countries to a conference to draw up a common policy 'for the defence of their interests in dealings with Russia, Britain and the United States.'"¹

The fact that these efforts did not cause a ripple on the diplomatic waters of Europe do not detract from the mischievous though wholly ridiculous designs of the gentry behind them.

After many unheeded warnings, the British Ministry of Information in February 1944, felt compelled to suppress one of the worst of the Polish papers—*Wiadomosci Polskie* because of its completely unbridled attacks on the Soviet Government. When the matter was raised in the House of Commons, Brendan Bracken replied: "In spite of more than one warning to desist from abusing the hospitality of Great Britain, this journal continued its efforts to stir up discord between our Allies. And extracts from its columns were widely used by German propagandists." And in reply to a supplementary question, Bracken, with some feeling, added: "The Poles have a considerable number of papers in this country and I do not believe that British

¹ *Daily Telegraph*, April 18, 1944.



II

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PHILIPS' HISTORICAL ATLAS
MEDIAEVAL AND MODERN

by
RAMSAY MUIR




EASTERN EUROPE

c. 1250

Scale 1:15,000,000 (240 miles - 1 inch)

English Miles

0 50 100 200 300 400 500

-  Latin States dependent on the Empire
-  Byzantine States
-  Church Lands

 Genoese

55

50

45

40

35



15

20

25

30

35

sailors should have to cart paper across the ocean in order to provide opportunities for foreigners in this country to help German propagandists and to sow discord."¹

In January 1944, after the Red Army had crossed the frontiers laid down in the Treaty of Riga (1921), the Polish Government in London informed the world at large that they had instructed the Underground Movement in Poland not to hinder the Soviet Forces but only to enter "into co-operation with the Soviet commanders in the event of the resumption of Polish-Soviet relations."²

This declaration was not well received by the British Press and the *Daily Telegraph* in a leader headed "First Things First" bluntly told the Poles: "Those most conscious of Polish gallantry in and loyalty to the Allied cause may well feel that Poland has nothing whatever to lose by putting first things first; and the first of all things is the defeat of Germany."

The Polish émigrés realized that they had made a bad blunder and some weeks later they stated that the underground movement in Poland had been instructed to co-operate with the Red Army. It is hardly necessary to add that the population of the Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia had no need of instructions from the Polish Government in London, they whole-heartedly co-operated with the Red Army and played no small part in its tremendous success.

However, the Polish Government in London seemed incapable of learning from its mistakes. A number of Ukrainians and Byelorussians—estimated at about 2,000—had reached Great Britain by devious routes, some from as far afield as the Argentine, their aim being to join in the fight against Nazi Germany. They were incorporated in the Polish army in England at the time when diplomatic relations existed between the U.S.S.R. and Poland. The British Government, recognizing the Polish Government in London as the legal Government of Poland, recommended these men to join the Polish Forces here. Old habits soon reasserted themselves and before long these Ukrainians and Byelorussians were subjected to the same persecution, religious and other, which their compatriots had suffered in the Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia between 1920 and 1939.

The British public were surprised and shocked towards the end of March 1944, when the facts came out. A number of these soldiers left their units in Scotland, travelled to London and applied for permission

¹ *Hansard*, February, 16, 1944, Cols. 171-2.

² *News Chronicle*, January 6, 1944.

to join the British Army. According to the *News Chronicle* report, the soldiers made among others, the following allegations against their officers:

1. They are never, or hardly ever, given leave to celebrate the Orthodox holidays. As a rule, when the Orthodox holidays are due, they are put on special duties.
2. They are forced to buy anti-Russian propaganda books and pamphlets and to distribute them among their Scottish friends.
3. A Ukrainian in the 1st Anti-Tank Regiment was told by his commanding officer: "You'll be the first man I'll shoot when we go into action."
4. Another Ukrainian was beaten by a Polish soldier who called him a Communist. An officer came up and stood by while the Polish soldier slapped the Ukrainian. The officer, instead of reprimanding the Pole, insulted the Ukrainian and said: "I'll finish you. You'll rot in prison."
5. There is no promotion for Ukrainians or White Russians. All these 30 men are still privates although they have been in the Army for years.¹

The men added: "There are more than two thousand of their comrades, Ukrainians and White Russians, in the Polish army in Scotland, all of whom wish to be transferred to the British Army. They urge that the British Government appoint a commission to investigate their case."²

When the subject was raised in the House of Commons the following dialogue ensued:

Mr. Price asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that a number of Ukrainian, White Russian, and other Orthodox Christian soldiers of the Polish Army have recently absented themselves without leave, on the grounds of certain grievances which they allege they suffer from; that these men are now liable to court-martial; and whether he will use his good offices with the Polish Government to see that these grievances are redressed.

Mr. Eden: Yes, Sir. I am aware of this case and have instructed His Majesty's Ambassador to Poland to seek further information on the subject urgently from the Polish Government.

Mr. Price: In view of the fact that these Orthodox Christian soldiers of the Polish Army have lost whatever roots they ever had in Poland, and therefore are not spiritually part of the Polish Army, will my right hon. friend see that, if it is technically possible, they shall be transferred to the British Army?

Mr. Eden: We have approached the Polish Government on the subject, and I must surely allow them to give us their statement.³

¹ *News Chronicle*, March 30, 1944.

³ *Hansard*, April 26, 1944, Col. 751.

² *Ibid.*

The men were returned to their units in Scotland and tried behind closed doors. "The same hush-hush atmosphere" wired the *Daily Express* Staff Reporter from Glasgow, "that pervaded the trial of the Jews¹ surrounded the prosecution of the other Poles. Reporters were politely turned away with the explanation that, under Polish military law, courts-martial are always heard in camera."²

According to the same report, sixteen (another report gave the figure as twenty-five) of the soldiers were sentenced to terms of imprisonment ranging from one to two and a half years.

The effects produced by these events both in Great Britain and abroad, coupled with the representations of the British Government, alarmed the Polish "Government," and when the subject was again raised in the House of Commons, May 17, 1944, Mr. Eden stated that the sentences had been annulled.

After the rupture of diplomatic relations between the U.S.S.R. and Poland in May 1943, the outlook for the future of relations between the two countries looked black indeed, but in these dark hours new forces arose among the Poles themselves, forces with a new outlook *vis-à-vis* the Soviet Union. Poles of various political opinions then on the territory of the U.S.S.R. developed the Union of Polish Patriots which had been formed some time previously into a powerful and representative organization. The Union's aims were many: to attend to the welfare of the numerous Poles then in the U.S.S.R., including the education of the children in Polish; to forge unbreakable bonds of friendship with the U.S.S.R.; to rebuild a strong democratic Polish Republic but without including within its frontiers Ukrainian and Byelorussian provinces—in other words, the eastern frontiers of Poland were to be the Curzon Line; to extend Poland's frontiers to the west so as to include historic Polish territories seized by Germany in the past; to build up a strong Polish army from Poles on Soviet territory and other Poles who would make their way through the German lines to Soviet territory.

The Union of Polish Patriots made astonishing progress in a relatively short space of time.

The *Times* correspondent in Moscow, in a lengthy article in that journal, April 17, 1944, stated that: the Union was supported by eighty per cent of the Poles in the Soviet Union; that the Polish Forces

¹ The Jews in question (i.e. a group of Jewish soldiers) had made similar complaints of ill-treatment and persecution.

² *Daily Express*, April 26, 1944.

under General Berling had three divisions in the field and the prospect of many more. "The writer has spoken with Polish prisoners-of-war," stated that correspondent, "within 72 hours of their surrendering from German labour corps, who expressed eagerness to join. From across the rivers large numbers of Poles have escaped in response to leaflets showered over Poland."

In May 1944 British and other correspondents visited the Polish Army in the Ukraine. "A new Polish Army is mustering for the march on Warsaw," cabled the *Daily Herald* representative with the Polish Army in the Ukraine. "Its ranks are swelled daily by the influx of volunteers from recently liberated districts.

"For six days I visited and talked with Polish units in the forward area.

"Their questions, remarks and opinions were utterly frank. On certain points there was general agreement—they had no use for the exiled Government in London, which they accused of following a reactionary political line, of fomenting hostility to the Soviet Union, and of perpetuating anti-Semitism."¹

The correspondent continued: "It was generally agreed that Poland should be permitted to expand westward and northward, receiving an extended frontage on the Baltic and East Prussia as well as Silesia and Pomerania."²

As mentioned on an earlier page, the British Government also accepted in principle the extension of Poland's pre-war frontiers to the North and West.

Meanwhile within occupied Poland another organization—the Polish National Council—was being built up and towards the end of May 1944, this body sent its delegates to Moscow. To quote the *Daily Herald*:

Delegates have arrived in Moscow from the Polish National Council which was set up in January in Poland as an organ of resistance to the Germans and of opposition to the Polish Government in London.

They have gone to discuss matters with the Union of Polish Patriots in Russia and (says Moscow radio) will seek to establish relations with the Soviet Government and other Allied Governments.

The Council claims to be a representative body including members of the various Democratic parties and groups, and claims, moreover, to be far more representative of the Resistance Movement than is the Government in London.³

It is hardly necessary to add that these claims were vehemently denied by the Polish Government in London.

¹ *Daily Herald*, May 9, 1944.

² *Ibid.*

³ May 25, 1944.

To sum up the period of the first six months of 1944: no improvement had taken place in the relations between the Soviet Government and the Polish Government in London; the claim of the Soviet Government to the Curzon Line as her western frontier with Poland received practically universal recognition; the Polish Forces—civilian and military, both on the territory of the U.S.S.R., and within Poland—who accepted the Curzon Line as the eastern frontier of Poland and who were desirous of collaborating whole-heartedly with the Soviet Government grew rapidly in numbers and influence; the Polish Government in London because of its persecution of Jews, Ukrainians and Byelorussians lost a great measure of sympathy both in Great Britain and abroad.

Beginning with the last week in June 1944, profound changes occurred on the eastern front which had an equally deep effect on the relations between the Government of the U.S.S.R., and the Polish Government in London.

On June 23, 1944, the Soviet Forces began a great advance to the west, which in speed, length and depth, had at that time no parallel in military history. Now the Polish Government in London, through its various agencies, had repeatedly declared that they would never renounce their pretensions to Vilna and Lvov. It is not difficult to imagine the alarm of these gentlemen when the dramatic news was published from Moscow that Vilna was liberated by the Red Army on July 13, 1944, and at the same time that the Soviet Forces were advancing in the direction of Lvov, which was actually liberated on the 27th of the same month. In passing we may add that very soon after the freeing of Vilna, the Lithuanian-Soviet Government moved back to that city, its historic capital, and re-established its administration there. Lvov, after its emancipation was described in the Soviet press as "an ancient Ukrainian city," which it certainly is, and immediately passed under the jurisdiction of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic.

The course of events were too strong for the Polish Government in London, they were compelled to discard some but by no means all of their illusions. The Prime Minister, M. Mikolajczyk, in an interview with the *Sunday Dispatch* stated:

I would welcome an opportunity to talk with M. Stalin myself about all outstanding questions, and would be ready to do so at any time and place without any pre-conditions.¹

¹ *Sunday Dispatch*, July 23, 1944.

The rest of the article was full of vague phrases about the need of the friendliest relations between the two States, but any clear reference to frontiers was studiously avoided.

Meanwhile events had been moving rapidly within Poland, among the Poles in the Soviet Union and on the front.

Chelm (Kholm), the first Polish town to be freed from the Germans was liberated by the Red Army on July 22, and the announcement by the Moscow radio was followed by the playing of the Polish National Anthem. Next day in Chelm the first legal Polish newspaper—the *Rzeczpospolita* appeared and it contained, among other things, a number of Decrees issued by the National Council of Poland. As they are all of historic importance, we quote them in full:

1. *Decree of the National Council of Poland on the formation of the Polish Committee of National Liberation:*

On the eve of decisive battles for the expulsion of the German invaders from Poland, the National Council of Poland sets up the Polish Committee of National Liberation as a provisional executive authority for direction of the people's struggle for liberation, for ensuring its independence and the restoration of the Polish State.

The Polish Committee of National Liberation is formed of the following persons:

President and Director of the Department of Foreign Affairs—Edward Boleslaw Osobka-Morawski; Vice-President and Director of the Department of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform—Andrei Witos; Vice-President—Wanda Wassilewska; Director of the Department of National Defence—Colgen Mihail Rola-Zymierski, Assistant Director of the Department of National Defence—Lt. Gen. Zigmund Berling; Director of the Department of Civil Administration—Stanislaw Kotek-Agroszewski; Director of the Department of National Economy and Finance—Jan Stefan Ganeman; Director of the Department of Justice—Jan Czechowski; Director of the Department of Public Security—Stanislaw Raczekiewicz; Director of the Department of Labour Protection, Social Insurance and Health Protection—Doctor Boleslaw Drobner; Director of the Department of Education—Doctor Stanislaw Skrzyszewski; Director of the Department of Culture and Art—Wincenty Rzymowski; Director of the Department of Information and Propaganda—Doctor Stefan Endrychowski; Director of the Department of Communications, Posts and Telegraph—Engineer Jan

Mihail Grubecki; Director of the Department of Compensation for War Damages—Doctor Emil Sommerstein.

The National Council of Poland has instructed the Polish Committee of National Liberation to define its provisional seat on liberated territory.

The National Council of Poland has included in the Polish Committee of National Liberation active workers of the underground movement who have crossed the front line, and also active workers of the Polish emigrés in the U.S.S.R. Five members of the Polish Committee of National Liberation have remained under German occupation where they continue to direct the struggle for liberation and maintain connection with the National Council of Poland. For obvious reasons the names of these five members of the Polish Committee of National Liberation cannot be made public.

(Signed) National Council of Poland.

WARSAW. July 21, 1944.

2. *Decree of the Polish National Council on Assumption of Supreme Authority over the Polish Army in the U.S.S.R. and on the merging of the People's Army with the Polish Army in the U.S.S.R. into a single Polish Army.*

The Polish National Council Decrees:

- (a) To assume supreme authority over the Polish Army in the U.S.S.R.;
- (b) To unite the People's Army with the Polish Army in the U.S.S.R.;
- (c) To name the united armies the Polish Army;
- (d) To set up a Supreme Command of the Polish Army composed of a Commander-in-Chief, his two assistants and two members of the Command;
- (e) The rank of General in the Polish Army will be conferred by the Presidium of the Polish National Council on the recommendation of the Supreme Command. The Presidium of the Polish National Council entrusts the Supreme Command with the right to promote to all other officers' ranks;
- (f) The present Decree does not infringe upon the operational subordination of the formations of the Polish army operating on the Soviet-German Front to the Supreme Command of the Red Army.

WARSAW. July 21st, 1944.

3. *Decree on the Appointment of the Commander-in-Chief and Two Assistants.*

In pursuance of the Decree of the National Council of Poland dated July 21st, 1944, on the subordination of the People's Army to the National Council of Poland and the merging of the People's

Army and the Polish Army within the U.S.S.R. into a single Polish Army, the Presidium of the National Council of Poland appoints Col. Gen. Mihail Rola-Zymerski as Commander-in-Chief of the Polish troops, Lt.-Gen. Zigmund Berling and Major General Alexander Zawadsky as his assistants, Col. Marian Marek-Spymalski and citizen Czech-Czhowski as members of the Command.

4. *Decree of the National Council of Poland on Subordination of the Union of Polish Patriots and the Polish Army in the U.S.S.R.*

The National Council of Poland, as the sole competent representative of the Polish people called upon to direct and concentrate all activities aimed at the liberation of Poland, takes under its control the Union of Polish Patriots in the U.S.S.R., and the Polish Army in the U.S.S.R. which is subordinated to it [the Union of Polish Patriots]. The National Council of Poland charges the Union of Polish Patriots also in the future with the functions of serving the cultural needs of Poles in the U.S.S.R. and their social welfare.

The *Rzeczpospolita* also published a manifesto of the Polish Committee of National Liberation, the most important points of which were: The Committee was acting in accordance with the legal Polish Constitution of March 17, 1921, and a Constituent Assembly on the basis of that Constitution would be summoned; the emigré Government based itself on the illegal Fascist Constitution of 1935 and were therefore only an "imposter authority"; Polish troops were entering Poland side by side with the Red Army and the Polish people were summoned to give these Forces every possible assistance and to rise to the struggle for the greatness of Poland, for restoration to the Motherland of the old Polish Pomorze and Opolska Silesia, for East Prussia, for a wide outlet to the sea, for Polish frontier posts on the Oder; the eastern frontiers should be settled on the principle: Polish lands—to Poland; Ukrainian, Byelorussian and Lithuanian lands—to Soviet Ukraine, Soviet Byelorussia and Soviet Lithuania; only a powerful Slav wall based on a Polish-Soviet-Czech agreement would prevent German aggression. Finally the Manifesto advocated a far-reaching Radical programme of social reform, including the distribution of the landlords' estates exceeding fifty hectares, among the peasants.

As already mentioned, all this appeared in the *Rzeczpospolita* on July 23, 1944, the same day as that on which the interview with M. Mikolajczyk appeared in the *Sunday Dispatch*.

Naturally the Chancelleries of the world, and particularly those of

the Allied Governments, were awaiting a declaration by the Soviet Government as to its intentions on Polish territory and its attitude towards the Polish Committee of National Liberation. The declaration came on July 25, 1944, from the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, and it fully justified Mr. Churchill's faith in the Soviet Union:

"The Soviet Government states that it regards the military operations of the Red Army on the territory of Poland as operations on the territory of a sovereign, friendly, allied State.

"In this connection the Soviet Government does not intend to establish organs of its own administration on the territory of Poland, considering this to be the affair of the Polish people. It has decided to conclude with the Polish Committee of National Liberation an agreement about relations between the Soviet Command and the Polish administration.

"The Soviet Government states that it does not pursue the aim of acquisition of any part of Polish territory, or of a change in the social system in Poland, and that the military operations of the Red Army on the territory of Poland are dictated solely by military necessity and by the endeavour to render the friendly Polish people assistance in its liberation from German occupation.

"The Soviet Government expresses the firm conviction that the fraternal peoples of the U.S.S.R. and Poland will jointly carry through to its end the struggle for liberation against the German invaders, and will lay stable foundations for a friendly Soviet-Polish collaboration."

On the following day an agreement was signed between the Soviet Government and the Polish Committee of National Liberation respecting the relations between the Soviet Commander-in-Chief and the Polish administration in the liberated Polish territories.

Meanwhile—thanks no doubt to the good offices of the British Government in London—M. Mikolajczyk, Prime Minister of the Polish Government in London; Count Romer, Foreign Minister; Professor Grabski, Speaker of the National Council, arrived in Moscow on August 1, 1944. Prior to their departure and whilst they were in Moscow they were given some sound advice by the British press and Government.

"On the territorial question," wrote the Diplomatic Correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* "M. Mikolajczyk is now ready to accept the Curzon Line as a temporary 'line of demarcation' between the Russian and Polish areas of administration in pre-war Polish territory. He and

his colleagues have long been urged to do this by the British Government."¹

And the British Prime Minister, in his review of the war situation, August 2, 1944, stated:

The Russian Armies now stand before the gates of Warsaw. They bring the liberation of Poland in their hands. They offer freedom, sovereignty and independence to the Poles. They ask that there should be a Poland friendly to Russia. This seems to me very reasonable considering the injuries which Russia has suffered through the Germans marching across Poland to attack her. The Allies would welcome any general rally or fusion of Polish Forces, both those who are working with the Western Powers and those who are working with the Soviets.²

"On Poland," commented the *Manchester Guardian* next day, "the Prime Minister could speak with sincerity of British good wishes for a Polish-Russian settlement; the hint to the Polish intransigent section was pretty clear."³

Whilst in Moscow, the three representatives of the Polish Government in London had conversations with Marshal Stalin and M. Molotov, and with representatives of the Polish Committee of National Liberation, but no agreement was reached.

"M. Mikolajczyk is returning to London," cabled *The Times* correspondent in Moscow on August 10th, "in order to bring before his Government the proposals advanced by the chairman of the National Council of Poland, M. Berut. Before leaving, the Polish Prime Minister stated that he was deeply convinced by his visit to Moscow of the sincere wish of the Russian Government to see all democratic Polish Forces combine in a unity that excluded only the Fascists. M. Mikolajczyk stated that he expected a continuation of the talks with the Polish delegation that sat opposite him during the two-day negotiation this week—possibly in Warsaw he added. 'I would very much like that.'"⁴

Mikolajczyk after consultation with his fellow ministers sent a reply to Moscow on August 31, 1944, but diplomatic correspondents in London at the time were of the opinion that the renewed offer was not likely to lead to positive results. "The Polish Prime Minister, M. Mikolajczyk," wrote the Diplomatic Correspondent of the *Daily Herald*, "explained last night his Government's proposals for Polish unity. They have been sent to Moscow for transmission to the leaders

¹ August 1, 1944.

³ August 3, 1944.

² *Hansard*, August 2, 1944, Col. 1482.

⁴ August 11, 1944.

of the Polish Liberation Committee in Lublin. But I see small hope of their acceptance."¹

Meanwhile, contrary to what the members of the Polish Government in London were saying, the Polish Committee of National Liberation were making good progress in building up their armed forces on liberated Polish territory. British correspondents in Moscow were very definite on this point.

Paul Winterton, cabling from Lublin, August 30, 1944, stated:

One of the most impressive sights in this city, Poland's temporary capital, is the steady stream of young men who are now coming in from all directions to swell rapidly the growing Polish Army.²

As regards the "Home Army," i.e. the Forces owing allegiance to the Polish Government in London, Winterton wrote:

The Polish Army is being built up not merely from Poles who lived and worked under the German occupation, and others who fought as guerillas in the forests under the directions of the Polish Committee in Moscow, but also from members of the Polish Home Army which was formerly operating behind the German lines under the direction of the London Government.³

This applied not only to the rank and file:

Some officers of the Home Army, regarding themselves as under oath to the London Government, are resigning their commissions and rejoining the new Polish Army as privates. They are, however, permitted by decree to retain their ranks in the new army if they want to do so.⁴

As one would expect, there was unfortunately still much bitterness between the followers of both sides. . . . Winterton continued:

It would be idle to pretend that there are no raw feelings. There are rather deep scars to be healed before Polish unity is achieved, but I feel absolutely certain that they will be healed.

For one thing, though the new Polish army under military necessity and for the sake of order is asserting its absolute authority over all irregular groups, its approach to its countrymen is persuasive rather than repressive.⁵

The leaders' aims were reconciliation and they were meeting with well-deserved results. Winterton went on: "I gained the impression that the Polish military leaders aimed at reconciliation in the common cause. Great numbers of the rank and file are being won over from the Home Army."⁶

¹ September 1, 1944.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

² *News Chronicle*, August 31, 1944.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

And *The Times* correspondent, basing his conclusion on many conversations in Lublin—"every one with whom I talked—and nobody seems to stop talking in Lublin now"—was equally emphatic:

In such an atmosphere it is natural that the Polish Army should form a rallying point and an element of stability, and that General Zymierski should tower above his colleagues in popular esteem. The army is so clearly non-political and so broadly representative in its rank and file of Polish life that in a land where martial virtues have always been admired its prestige has grown enormously. As a result, while in the political sphere there has been some conflict of opinion, in military affairs, I was told, the process of rallying all the national forces is proceeding smoothly.¹

And then followed this significant concluding paragraph:

It is reported that the entire Home Army organization is submitting to his [Zymierski's] authority after hearing what kind of army he commands. He declared that all were welcome in the army save Fascists and that the past would be forgotten—a significant statement from a man who suffered imprisonment in exile at the hands of political opponents. No consideration of the Polish situation can be complete unless the role of General Zymierski's army is taken into account.

In the same article the correspondent stated that "one reason why it was hoped that the British and American Governments would accept M. Morawski's invitation to send military observers to Poland was that it was believed their presence would allay suspicions of allied discord. In general, the Lublin administration feels that London and Washington lack information about its activity and aims, and that, if only for the sake of objectivity, this should be repaired."

Unfortunately, Britain and the U.S.A. did not avail themselves of this invitation.

¹ September 1, 1944.

Chapter XIV

WARSAW

IN THE MEANTIME a tragic episode occurred which as far as the newspaper reading public was concerned, threw in the shade everything else happening in Poland at this time. During July 1944, the Red Army achieved amazing successes. Writing in the *Evening News* August 1, 1944, Lt.-Gen. Sir Douglas Brownrigg stated:

In the single month of July the Russians have recovered territory almost exactly equal in size and very similar in shape to the whole of England, Scotland and Wales put together.

Unchecked anywhere in their amazing offensive, the Russians have completed a month of incredible successes unequalled (so far as I am aware) in military history.

The Soviet war communique dated July 31, 1944, among other things stated:

Troops of the 1st White Russian front, in hard fighting, captured the towns of Siedice and Minsk-Mazowiecki (24 miles east of Warsaw) and more than 500 other places, including the towns of Radzymin, Volomin (10 miles north-east of Warsaw), and Otwock (12 miles south-west of Warsaw).

On the following day, August 1st, the Polish Home Army in Warsaw, under the command of General Bor, whose real name is Tadeusz Komorowski, a regular Polish army officer, rose in revolt and tried to seize the city. The whole story of this ill-fated insurrection and the reactions of the Soviet High Command thereto has not, at the moment of writing, yet been told, and therefore we can only record here some pertinent established facts. At that time diplomatic relations between the Soviet Government and the Polish Government in London did not exist and consequently there was no agreed co-ordination between General Bor and the Soviet High Command. Further, the British Government was not informed of the insurrection until it had been actually started.

"No attempt was made to inform and co-ordinate with the Soviet Command any action in Warsaw," said the *Tass* agency in a statement authorized by the Soviet Government. "Responsibility for events in Warsaw therefore falls exclusively on the emigré circles in London."

On the same day as that on which this communique appeared in the press, the following cable was published in the *Daily Express* from its Moscow correspondent, Alaric Jacob:

Two days before the London Polish delegation left Moscow one of its members, who did not give me permission to quote him by name, made this observation to me:

"The Polish underground within Warsaw is putting up a brave struggle. We hope help will be forthcoming soon.

"In 1939, you know, we Poles also struggled, hoping for aid from the west which never came.

"To-day we fight again, hoping for aid from the east which one must hope will not be much longer delayed."

I asked whether it was suggested that the Red Army was not trying to take Warsaw as soon as possible, and whether since the London Government claimed that the Warsaw underground was under its control, contact had been established with the Russians before the order was given to rise.

The reply was: "Of course the underground is under our control, but, you know, when intense passions are aroused such movements are difficult to regulate precisely."

Nothing was said about the Russians having been consulted at all.¹

"The decision as to the date on which the rising should start," wrote the Diplomatic Correspondent of *The Times*, "was left to the Polish Deputy Prime Minister, who is in Poland, and General Bor, who fixed it for August 1. The Polish Government fully endorse the decision. Unfortunately neither the Russian nor the British Government was informed of the decision. Any suggestion that the defenders were left to their own meagre resources in their fight against a brutal foe is unwarranted."²

The Soviet press expressed disapproval of the insurrection on the practical grounds that it was premature and would result in needless and fruitless sacrifices on the side of the Poles. There was another intensely practical objection on the part of the Soviet High Command. In their long advance from Stalingrad to the western frontiers of the Soviet Union the cities and towns they had liberated were legion, but in no case had the Soviet High Command called on the inhabitants of a city to rise in revolt before the Red Army had either surrounded or had entered the city because in the nature of things the arms which the insurgents could obtain would place them in a position of hopeless inferiority in comparison with the Reichswehr.

¹ August 14, 1944.

² August 15, 1944.

"There are towns that have been liberated by storm and many others by by-passing, but no big town by concerted action between the Army and inhabitants," stated a correspondent in *Pravda*, August 19, 1944. "It has been the Red Army's experience that relatively unarmed popular movements fighting in areas where the enemy is heavily concentrated are bound to fail in face of strong forces armed with modern weapons."¹

The Polish Government in London have often protested that the rising in Warsaw was the best means of both assisting the Red Army in general and of aiding it to liberate the city. That certainly was not the Soviet estimate of the episode.

"They [the Russians] have, in fact, constantly upbraided the Polish home army for letting opportunities slip to conduct such operations, which are the most effective, in their experience, that guerillas can undertake," cabled the *Times-Manchester Guardian* correspondent from Moscow. "But at the end of July, when large forces of German armour were on the move, General Bor was apparently preparing the Warsaw insurrection, with the result that enemy reinforcements arrived in the Siedlice area in time and in sufficient strength temporarily to stem Rokossovsky's advance and delay Warsaw's liberation."²

It is a hard thing to say in view of the tragedy of Warsaw but the unpleasant truth is that the insurrection did not hasten, on the contrary it delayed, the liberation of that unfortunate and ruined city.

The Poles in Great Britain started scandalous and unfounded rumours to the effect that the Red Army deliberately refrained from liberating Warsaw. These dastardly accusations were indignantly denied by commentators in this country—even by those who were critical of the Soviet's policy *vis-à-vis* Warsaw—and were refuted by military correspondents by the simple but effective process of stating the sober facts.

Mr. Morley Richards (the well-known military correspondent) in a review of the European fronts in the *Daily Express*, September 5, 1944, stated:

In the centre, Warsaw remains as a single bastion before the great open plain which leads straight to Berlin. Here the Germans have flung the rest of the armour they possess in the east and all their reserves that could be scraped together from an area covering hundreds of miles to halt the Red Army.

And three days later, the same writer, comparing the situation before Caen with that in front of Warsaw, wrote:

¹ *Manchester Guardian*, August 21, 1944.

² *Ibid.*

Here the situation is much the same as that which confronted the Allied group in France. Warsaw is the linchpin of the German defence, as Caen was in Normandy.

Here also are the elements of twelve enemy panzer divisions, as there were against the Anglo-Canadian army in France. The Russians have been steadily bleeding this remaining German strength as Field-Marshal Montgomery did at Caen.¹

In fact, so determined were the Germans to keep Warsaw in their hands that they sacrificed their hold on France to do so.

Major Philip Gribble, the well-known military critic, stated:

When the Russians reached the Vistula at the end of July there was a temptation to forget the mathematics of logistics. Those mathematics exerted their inevitable control on events. After an advance from the east of up to 350 miles on a 600-mile front, insufficient supplies dominated the situation.

As the Russian thrusts weakened, the enemy scraped together sufficient strength to restore stability and time in which to switch armour from the west to the east of the 3,000-mile Continental perimeter.

Four panzer divisions were brought from the Western front to the defence of Warsaw. They reached this front in time unexpectedly to continue the defence of Warsaw until to-day.

With this armoured switch the western sector was sacrificed to the east by the enemy High Command. The German defence of Warsaw was paid for by General Patton's breakthrough at Avranches and the consequent collapse of German resistance in France.²

There is no need to labour this point further.

Shortly after the insurrection started the Poles in London and Warsaw appealed to the British and U.S.A. Governments for aid but abused the Soviet Government for not sending help. It is difficult to resist the conclusion that the Polish Government in London was more concerned in exploiting the rising to foster suspicion between the Allied Governments and the Soviet Government, than in obtaining aid for Warsaw.

According to some press reports the British and U.S.A. Governments had asked the Soviet Government for permission to use the shuttle service which had been established between Western Europe and the Soviet Union in order to supply Warsaw, but it was stated that the Soviet Government had refused to permit aerodromes in the Soviet Union to be used for that purpose. This was reported in the press but never confirmed officially either by the British or the

¹ *Daily Express*, September 8, 1944.

² *News Chronicle*, October 11, 1944.

American Government. On the contrary, at least as far as the British Government was concerned, it had never asked for such permission, as the following dialogue in the House of Commons demonstrates:

Major-General Sir Alfred Knox asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what reason was given by the Government of the U.S.S.R. for their refusal of permission for R.A.F. planes to land in Soviet territory after dropping munitions and supplies for the patriot forces in Warsaw.

Mr. Eden: There has never been any question of aircraft of the Royal Air Force undertaking such shuttle flights to bases in Soviet territory for these operations.¹

It is true that supplies were flown to Warsaw from Italy by American, Polish and South African airmen and that the aircraft flew back direct to Italy, but that damaged machines flew on to Soviet territory and landed there.

The Polish Government in London repeatedly averred that it was possible in the early stages of the revolt to help Warsaw from the air. But the Lublin Committee emphatically denied this. For example, *The Times* correspondent in the course of a lengthy cable from Lublin dated August 28, 1944, after declaring that "important statements were made here this morning by General Michal Zymierski and M. Edward Osobka-Morawski, of the Polish Committee of National Liberation, in connection with the battle for Warsaw," continued:

General Zymierski said that in all about 22 enemy divisions, including five fresh Panzer divisions, were involved in the defence of Warsaw. It was against this background of heavy fighting—in which the Russian and Polish forces were striving at high cost to liberate Warsaw according to a plan that would have alleviated the inhabitants' sufferings—that the General asked that events inside Warsaw be considered. The first news of the insurrection of August 1 had, he said, caused him much concern, for it indicated that the leaders were completely unaware of the Russian plans. He described their action in touching off a rising by people who were eager to fight and raised to a dangerous pitch of optimism by the Red Army's rapid advance, but whose arms were suitable for effective action only on the very eve of liberation, as an irresponsible act which led to the destruction of a third of the city and the deaths of perhaps 200,000 persons.

The General added that the problem of succouring Warsaw was uppermost in his mind, but that it was impracticable to supply arms or troops by air because most of them would be bound to fall into German hands. The Germans had never lost control of the major part of the city, although individual buildings and areas of narrow streets were seized by the rebels.²

¹ *Hansard*, September 27, 1944, Col. 217.

² *The Times*, August 30, 1944.

It may be urged that that cable was dated August 28th and that in the early days of the rising most of the city was in Polish hands, but a cable to the *Daily Express* from Moscow quotes an eye-witness report to the effect that by the *third day* the Germans "had blasted a way through the main streets."¹

That the Russians and General Zymierski were justified in their contentions was subsequently confirmed by General Bor-Komorowski himself, who in the course of an interview given on his way to London on May 9, 1945, said:

"We asked London to supply us by air with arms, food and medical supplies.

"Unfortunately, the containers were dropped from 3,000 metres (10,000 ft.) and 85 per cent fell in the German lines."² —

The military situation from the point of view of bringing aid to Warsaw by air was greatly improved on September 11, 1944, when the Red Army liberated Praga, a large industrial suburb of Warsaw on the east bank of the Vistula. On the same day or immediately afterwards, the Soviet Air Force began to drop supplies to the insurgents and gave permission to the British and U.S.A. Air Forces to use the shuttle service for the same purpose. On these two points the British Prime Minister, Mr. Winston Churchill, in the course of a reply to a question in the House of Commons, stated:

As soon as His Majesty's Government learnt that the rising in Warsaw had begun, they expressed to the Soviet Government their hope that, although such co-ordination had not yet been achieved, they would nevertheless bring such aid to the Polish insurgents as lay in their power. The Soviet armies were at that time engaged in heavy fighting with strong German forces to the east and north-east of Warsaw, but when their operational plans permitted and direct contact had been established with the Polish Commander-in-Chief in Warsaw, they sent supplies to the Polish forces and provided them with air cover and anti-aircraft support. This assistance has been gratefully acknowledged by the Polish Prime Minister and by the Polish Commander-in-Chief in Warsaw . . .

On 18th September a large escorted force of United States heavy bombers carried out a successful operation, which was planned in co-operation with the Soviet High Command but which was unavoidably postponed for several days because of bad weather. This force, after dropping a large quantity of supplies in Warsaw, the bulk of which came from British sources, flew on to bases in Soviet territory, escorted by Soviet aircraft.³

¹ *Daily Express*, August 30, 1944.

² *News Chronicle*, May 12, 1945.

³ *Hansard*, September 26, 1944, Cols. 26-7.

Soviet aid to the insurgents continued right up to the day of the capitulation of Warsaw, but apparently the shuttle service was not used again after September 18, 1944, at any rate, no further flights were reported in the press, due no doubt to the difficulties of such operations and perhaps to doubts as to their efficacy.

Before, during, and after the rising in Warsaw, the Soviet Forces were carrying out a huge strategic plan previously worked out by its High Command and naturally they stuck to this plan just as the British and American High Command applied theirs in Western Europe after "D-Day" and were not deflected from that plan by the attacks of the enemy flying bombs, despite the havoc wrought by them in "Southern England and the London area."

"In Poland it cannot be expected," wrote the *Daily Telegraph* in a leading article, "that a rising, supremely gallant and natural, but strategically premature, will induce the Russian High Command to vary its long-matured plans."¹

Many observers outside the U.S.S.R. and Poland during the time of the Warsaw rising were of the opinion that in all probability some important and pertinent facts were being held back by the Polish Committee of National Liberation or by the Soviet Government or both, for fear of revealing valuable information to the enemy, facts which when made public would throw a flood of light on the actual course of events. These observers were not mistaken. On October 1, 1944, representatives of the Polish Committee of National Liberation were in Moscow and held a press conference at which M. Osobka-Morawski, Chairman of the Committee, and General Rola-Zymierski answered questions put to them by foreign press correspondents.

Asked why no attempt was made to render the insurgents aid before September 13th General Rola-Zymierski stated:

"Before that day we did not know the insurgents' exact dispositions. Aid was rendered immediately after the necessary information was received."

One of the correspondents asked whether at present there existed contact between the Red Army Command and the insurgents.

General Rola-Zymierski declared that during the period September 13th to 23rd-24th, this contact had been constant. During this period many messengers and officers had arrived from the centre of Warsaw.

¹ August 10, 1944.

At a correspondent's request General Rola-Zymierski told in detail how on the night of September 13th an operation organized by the Red Army Command to aid the insurgents was carried out.

"On the night of September 13th," he stated, "I was at Marshal Rokossovsky's H.Q. From 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. 'U-2' planes escorted by fighters, were flying over Warsaw dropping arms, ammunition and food to the insurgents; 282 planes took part. During the night the planes dropped food, 180,000 cartridges, 1,200 grenades and several hundred tommy-guns."

Replying to the question why these data were not published at the time, General Rola-Zymierski said:

"We considered it in the interests of the insurgents to withhold the reports, as these reports could have reached the Germans, and this would have prevented the rendering of further aid. These data appeared in the Polish press published in liberated territory."

General Rola-Zymierski then touched on the question of rendering aid to Warsaw through British aircraft, and noted that often arms, food and other supplies dropped by Allied aircraft had never reached Warsaw.

Some packages had been found as far as thirty kilometres east of Warsaw. As to aid rendered by the Red Army, the latter, compared with the Allies, was in a better position in view of its close proximity, and therefore was able to drop packages from "U-2" planes without parachutes.

Replying to a correspondent's question whether when speaking about Allied assistance he had in view only British assistance or only American assistance, General Rola-Zymierski said that he had in view both.

As to the whereabouts of General Bor, General Rola-Zymierski replied that "On the basis of reports which came into our possession we established that the General never was on the territory of Warsaw throughout the time of the uprising."

When a journalist asked where was Bor, General Rola-Zymierski replied that the Command of the Polish troops knew this. However, he could not disclose General Bor's whereabouts.

"One can only say that General Bor was at a considerable distance from Warsaw."

One foreign correspondent asked whether there existed liaison between all groups fighting in Warsaw. General Rola-Zymierski replied:

Messengers arrived from Warsaw to Lublin who swam across the Vistula and brought reports on the situation in the city. On the basis of this concrete information we must state that all organisations which participated in operations—the National Army, People's Army and others—acted in Warsaw without co-ordination.

Thus in some sectors units of the National Army fought under the direction of Colonel Monter, in other areas only units of the Polish People's Army acted. These are now joining the ranks of the Polish Army headed by General Skokowski. In some areas Skokowski acted in the name of the People's Army, Polish People's Army and Security Corps.

Referring then to the question of contact between separate groups within Warsaw, General Rola-Zymierski stated that such contact was not constant, and that liaison between separate groups was frequently interrupted.

General Rola-Zymierski showed the Conference a plan of Warsaw with the positions of separate fighting groups up to September 13th.

M. Osubka-Morawski, who then spoke, emphasized the difficulties the Red Army and Polish troops had had to overcome in the capture of Praga, and those which still faced them.

"The powerful defence of this area," he said, "is explained by the fact that the Vistula is the last obstacle. If it is taken this will entail the same consequences as those which resulted from the offensive of the armies of Marshal Rokossovsky when considerable territory, with Lublin in the centre, was cleared of the enemy.

"As an example of the ferocity of the fighting may serve the engagements in the area of the town Radzimin and in the areas of other towns which changed hands repeatedly."

In reply to the question addressed to military circles why Warsaw cannot be liberated early, M. Osubka-Morawski stated that note should be taken that Minsk, Kiev and Leningrad were liberated only after protracted siege. The capture of Praga had cost Polish troops and the Red Army heavy losses, though German losses had been considerably heavier. Several battalions of Polish troops were sent to the Chernjahow area to aid the insurgents. However, they had been compelled to return. The capture of Warsaw was impossible if heavy armament was not ferried across the Vistula.

"This is not an easy task, since the Vistula here is up to seven hundred metres wide. The only way to liberate Warsaw is to surround it, and take it in pincers. This requires time."

Replying to a remark of one of the foreign correspondents concerning reports which appeared in the Anglo-American press alleging

that on July 30th or 31st the Kosciuszko broadcasting station called for an uprising, member of the Polish Committee of National Liberation Endrihowski stated that there was no such appeal.

For some months, for several years indeed, the Union of Polish Patriots in its broadcasts had been urging the Polish people to struggle. These were appeals for partisan struggle, appeals for the preparation of general uprising. However, this had not been a signal to begin an uprising in the city.

In reply to another correspondent General Rola-Zymierski stated definitely that there had never been any contact between General Bor and the Red Army and Marshal Rokossovsky, and that General Bor's representatives never came to Marshal Rokossovsky's H.Q."

Answering the question of another correspondent, whether the transfer of the Byelostok Region to the jurisdiction of the civil administration of the Polish Committee meant that the Curzon Line became valid as the frontier line between Poland and the U.S.S.R., M. Osibka-Morawski observed that the question of the State frontier had not been finally settled. The Curzon Line constituted a basis. A Frontier Commission would be formed.

One of the American correspondents asked what was the purpose of the arrival of representatives of the Polish Committee in Moscow, and also whether there existed any prospect of the resumption of negotiations between the Polish Committee of National Liberation and the Polish emigré Government. M. Osibka-Morawski replied:

"Our arrival in Moscow is connected with the solution of current problems between the Polish Committee of National Liberation and the Soviet Government. Nothing new has occurred in the relations between the Polish Committee of National Liberation and the emigré Government."

M. Osibka-Morawski replying to another question said:

"Our demands remain the same as before, the main demand being recognition of the 1921 Constitution. Something new might lie in the fact that possibly certain members of the emigré Government in London would prove to be responsible for the Warsaw adventure."

As already mentioned, on and after September 14th, the date on which the Red Army occupied Praga, the Soviet Forces aided the Warsaw insurgents in many ways, and this help continued until the leaders of the insurrection surrendered on October 2, 1944. This is

not in doubt. General Bor himself is the witness. In a despatch from that officer to London, he stated: "Since the night of September 13th-14th we have received daily arms and food dropped by the Russian air force on the centre of the city. Supplies were also dropped on the suburbs."¹

Next day in a further message to London, General Bor stated:

We are active in the centre of the city, attacking the Germans on the west bank of the Vistula. We are frustrating their attempts to organize a solid defence line on the river, and forcing them to fight on two fronts. In this area our attack gained us some ground, thanks to support from the Russian artillery. The Germans suffered heavy losses.²

In a despatch dated September 19th, General Bor declared:

To-day (Tuesday) was the second day running free of German air raids. This is the result of cover given by Soviet fighters and A.A. guns. Russian guns and aircraft continue to bombard the sectors of German resistance in the Warsaw area.³

And in a broadcast from London to Warsaw on the same day, September 19th, the Polish Prime Minister, M. Mikolajczyk declared:

To-day the Soviet air force is giving you air cover and A.A. artillery. The Russians are shelling enemy forces and are already dropping some arms and food, thus making it possible to continue the fight. On behalf of the Polish Government I acknowledge this help with gratitude, and at the same time I appeal for further help.⁴

In a report dated September 21, 1944, General Bor stated: "We again received arms and ammunition dropped by Russian aircraft."

As late as September 29th, General Bor reported that supplies had been dropped during the night by Soviet planes.

Mr. Winston Churchill, reporting the surrender of Warsaw, to the House of Commons, stated among other things:

Despite all the efforts of the Soviet Army, the strong German positions on the Vistula could not be taken, and relief could not come in time. British, American, Polish and Soviet airmen did what they could to succour the Poles at Warsaw, but although this sustained the Polish resistance beyond what would have seemed possible, it could not turn the tide.⁵

We do not think that it is necessary to labour this point further: from the time that it was physically possible to aid the Warsaw

¹ *The Times*, September 18, 1944.

² *Ibid.*, September 19, 1944.

³ *Ibid.*, September 21, 1944.

⁴ *Ibid.*, September 20, 1944.

⁵ *Hansard*, October 5, 1944, Cols. 1139-40.

insurgents, the Soviet Forces did all that was humanly possible, bearing in mind that its military dispositions and aims on the other parts of its immense front from the Arctic Ocean to the Black Sea had been made a considerable time beforehand and could not be altered without affecting adversely the course and duration of the war.

Why the surrender of Warsaw took place when it did and in the manner in which it did has not yet been told in detail. Here we can only quote from statements issued on the subject by the Polish Government in London and by the Lublin Committee.

A report received in London early on Tuesday, October 3, 1944, stated:

During Monday there were only insignificant local skirmishes. A mass evacuation of the civilian population is in progress as a result of an agreement between the Polish Red Cross in Warsaw and the German authorities. There is a lack of medical supplies and food stocks are completely exhausted.¹

A later report from General Bor declared:

Warsaw has fallen after having exhausted all means of fighting and all food supplies on the sixty-third day of her heroic struggle against the overwhelming superiority of the enemy. On October 2, at 22.00 hours, the defenders of Warsaw fired the last shots.²

Then later on October 3rd, the Polish Prime Minister in London averred:

The cessation of military operations occurred after 63 days of fighting, after all supplies had been exhausted, when the garrison and people were completely starved out, had been deprived of water for many weeks, and lacked medical supplies and dressings for the thousands of wounded, lying in underground hide-outs without aid; after vain attempts to fight their way out; after the successive fall of the Old Town, of the suburbs of Mokotow and Zoliborz; and finally, after all hopes of relief from outside had vanished; because attempts made by the Soviet Forces and the Polish formations co-operating with them to force a crossing of the Vistula in the Warsaw area had proved futile.

The garrison and population of the capital have fulfilled their soldierly duty beyond the limits of human endurance and gallantry. Warsaw's fight throughout August and September of 1944 is the only instance in the history of this war in which a great city has conducted such a long and isolated defence with her own means, without heavy equipment, without any considerable help from outside against the superior enemy having at his disposal the whole

¹ *The Times*, October 4, 1944.

² *Ibid.*

destructive might of modern warfare. The defence of Warsaw will remain for ever a testimony to the invincible moral strength of the Polish nation and its unyielding will to independent life.¹

On the other hand, the *Polpress* Agency on behalf of the Lublin Committee stated on October 3, 1944:

The Command of the National Army in Warsaw with Col. Monter at its head acting on behalf of Gen. Bor, who has been absent from Warsaw throughout the uprising, has decided to surrender and deliver the insurgents and arms into the Germans' hands.

It has discarded the idea of breaking through from Warsaw in order either to cross to the right bank of the Vistula to liberated land, or to move west for linking up with the troops fighting in the enemy rear.

Units of the People's Army, the Security Corps, the Polish People's Army and those units of the National Army which do not want to submit to the decision of the Command of the National Army as to surrender, are fighting their way from Warsaw, arms in hand. The first group, which after violent fighting broke through from Joliboj, has already reached the right bank of the Vistula.

Leaders of the uprising from the camp of the Sanacja are liquidating the uprising with the same methods with which they began it. They began it without any co-ordination with the Command of the Polish Army or the Red Army, considering only their own selfish interests. They now conclude the uprising in surrender without considering the fate of the heroic insurgents, and prefer to deliver them into the hands of the Germans rather than link up in fighting with the Polish Army.

Among the officers who did reach the right bank of the Vistula were Major Szaniawski, Captain Alexander and Lieutenant Zenon (of the People's Army), and Lieutenant Zydmundzy (of the National Army).

In a press interview Major Szaniawski stated that he and several other officers had put forward a plan to the Chief Command of the National Army of the insurgents to fight their way through to the west bank of the river, but that the plan had been turned down by the Chief Command. In concluding this interview Major Szaniawski said: "The Chief Command of the National Army deliberately delivered the insurgents to the Hitlerite hangmen without stopping at provocation in order to prevent the link up of insurgent troops with the Polish Army, which was the most ardent desire of all those who remained on the left bank."

It is hardly necessary to add that the Soviet press, although they condemned the leaders for having started the rising and for concluding

¹ *The Times*, October 4, 1944.

it as they did, paid a very warm tribute to the heroism and self-sacrifice of the insurgents.

During the course of the insurrection an episode occurred which was strongly resented by the British and other Allied Governments and which cast a flood of light on the working of the 1935 Polish Constitution.

The Polish General Sosnkowski, in the course of an Order of the Day on the fifth anniversary of the German aggression against Poland stated, among other things:

Five years have passed since Poland, encouraged by the British Government and having received their guarantees, stood up to a lonely struggle against the German might . . .

For a whole month the soldiers of the Home Army and the population of Warsaw have stood alone in a terrible struggle behind street barricades, in spite of insufficient supplies and the immense technical superiority of the enemy. The people of Warsaw left alone abandoned on the common battle-front against the Germans—this is a ghastly and tragic riddle which the Poles are unable to solve, especially in view of the great strength of the allies on the threshold of the sixth year of war.

Arguments about gains and losses are put forward. The loss of 27 planes over Warsaw in one month means little to the Allied air forces, who have over 10,000 planes at their disposal.

Let us not forget the losses suffered by the Polish Air Force during the Battle of Britain, which were well over 40 per cent, while only 15 per cent of planes and crews were lost during attempts to help Warsaw.

The publication of this statement naturally created a sensation because of its contents and obvious implications. The fact immediately emerged that the Order of the Day had been issued without consultation with the Polish Cabinet.

The Diplomatic Correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* after referring to a meeting between Mr. Eden, the British Foreign Secretary and M. Mikolajczyk, the Polish Prime Minister, Mr. Romer, the Foreign Minister, and Count Raczynski, the Ambassador, continued: "Mr. Eden was informed that the Order was issued without the Polish Government being informed and that its intention was to embarrass the Prime Minister and his colleagues."¹

The Diplomatic Correspondent of *The Times* commented:

Some Poles in responsible positions reject the inference, which they think the statement contains, that Poland resisted the German attack in 1939 solely or mainly because of the British guarantee.

¹ September 6, 1944.

British readers take especial exception to the passage in which General Sosnkowski seems to imply that the R.A.F. counted the cost of helping Warsaw.¹

And after referring to the meeting between Mr. Eden and the three Polish representatives, the correspondent continued: "Afterwards the Polish Cabinet met in the gravest and most critical session which it has yet held."

Under a democratic constitution, General Sosnkowski could and would have been immediately dismissed by the Cabinet, but under the Polish Constitution of 1935, he could only be dismissed by the President. According to many reports which appeared in the British press at that time, the Polish Government in London unanimously called on the President to dismiss Sosnkowski but some of the more reactionary elements among the Poles in Great Britain supported the Commander-in-Chief.

"A defiant note has now been thrown into the crisis," wrote Stefan Litauer, a well-known Polish journalist and former head of the London office of the Polish Telegraph Agency, "by a manifesto ascribed to the Pilsudski group, widely circulated in the ranks of the Polish Armed Forces, appealing to the President not to dismiss General Sosnkowski and refusing to obey the Government orders. The manifesto is strongly anti-British and violently anti-Russian."²

Pressed from both sides the President temporized and it was not until after many crises in the Polish Government in London and the utmost pressure that the President finally on September 30th dismissed General Sosnkowski. The emigré Government immediately appointed General Bor-Komorowski, then Commander of the Home Army in Poland, to the vacant position.

The new appointment was violently denounced in liberated Poland. "Both Mr. Osobka-Morawski and General Zymierski," cabled *The Times* correspondent from Moscow, "expressed vehement disapproval of General Komorowski's appointment as Commander-in-Chief. They stated that to their knowledge he had not been in Warsaw at any time during the rising but had been some twenty miles from the city. General Zymierski declared that General Komorowski's representatives had at no time been in contact with Marshal Rokossovsky or his headquarters. Mr. Osobka-Morowski stated emphatically that his committee considered General Komorowski a criminal and that

¹ *The Times*, September 6, 1944. ² *News Chronicle*, September 11, 1944.

to the bulk of the population of Warsaw he was a more hated figure than General Sosnkowski. General Komorowski, he said, would be arrested if he were found. The Polish Government must be crazy if they accepted his nomination by the 'President.'"¹

And *Pravda* in an editorial stated:

The crisis of the emigré Government is the crisis of all Poles in London separated from the Polish people and the living, true Poland.

The crisis is too profound to be solved by some change in personnel. On the contrary, the changes will aggravate the internal struggle going on in the camp of these political failures.

From that time onwards the schisms in the ranks of the Polish Government in London grew deeper and wider with the natural result that it steadily lost in prestige both in Poland and abroad.

¹ *The Times*, October 2, 1944.

Chapter XV

THE MOSCOW AND CRIMEA CONFERENCES

AS OUR READERS WILL UNDERSTAND from the last chapter, the deadlock in Soviet-Polish relations was complete, as absolute as ever it had been, but the British and Soviet Governments made another attempt to resolve it during the visit of Mr. Winston Churchill and Mr. Eden to Moscow, October 9 to 18, 1944. Shortly after their arrival the Polish Prime Minister, M. Mikolajczyk, was invited to Moscow. He was accompanied by M. Romer, the Foreign Minister and Professor Grabski, President of the National Council in London; the leaders of the Lublin Committee were also invited to Moscow. All that took place at the meetings between the four parties has not been revealed in detail, but the official British-Soviet communique issued at the close of the Moscow conversations, among many other things stated:

Important progress was made towards solution of the Polish question, which was closely discussed between the Soviet and British Governments. They held consultations both with the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Polish Government and with the president of the National Council and chairman of the Committee of National Liberation at Lublin. These discussions have notably narrowed differences and dispelled misconceptions. Conversations are continuing on outstanding points.

There can be no question that a very determined effort was made by the British and Soviet mediators to effect a settlement.

"It is no secret that Poland took up a large part of the time," cabled Mr. Alexander Werth from Moscow. "The Russians talked to the Lublin Poles; the British (notably Mr. Eden and Sir Archibald Clark-Kerr) to the London Poles. Then the discussion went to a higher sphere, with Mr. Churchill and Marshal Stalin taking the lead. Moreover there were meetings between the British and the Lublin Poles and between the Russian and the London Poles.

"Mr. Churchill saw Mr. Morawski and others; Marshal Stalin saw M. Mikolajczyk on the last day, and this meeting was particularly fruitful, and substantially changed the outlook for the better. Moreover, the two sets of Poles had at least one meeting between themselves."¹

¹ *Sunday Times*, October 22, 1944.

At that time the representatives of H.M. Government in Moscow were optimistic—Mr. Werth continued—"In British quarters now the prospect of an early Polish settlement after M. Mikolajczyk's return to London is considered definitely good unless the Polish Premier meets with uncompromising opposition from a large body of London Poles. But this time, with the authority of Mr. Churchill and Marshal Stalin thrown into the discussion, M. Mikolajczyk may be able, it is believed, to overcome these difficulties."¹

Mr. Churchill shortly after his return to London gave a report to the House of Commons on the results of the Moscow talks. Here we are mainly concerned with his references to Poland and Soviet-Polish relations. "In this sphere there are two crucial issues," said the British Prime Minister. "The first is the question of the eastern frontier of Poland with Russia and the Curzon Line, as it is called, and the new territories to be added to Poland in the north and in the west. That is the first issue. The second is the relation of the Polish Government with the Lublin National Liberation Committee. On these two points, apart from many subsidiary and ancillary points, we held a series of conferences with both parties. We saw them together and we saw them separately, and, of course, we were in constant discussion with the heads of the Soviet Government."²

Mr. Churchill continued that although unfortunately solutions on the two issues were not reached "we have got a great deal nearer to the solution of both."³ He urged the Poles in London to step up negotiations and continued: "If the Polish Government had taken the advice we tendered them at the beginning of this year, the additional complication produced by the formation of the Polish National Committee of Liberation at Lublin would not have arisen."⁴

Mr. Churchill repeated that "Britain and Soviet Russia, and I do not doubt the United States, are all firmly agreed in the re-creation of a strong, free, independent, sovereign Poland loyal to the Allies and friendly to her great neighbour and liberator, Russia."⁵

The British Prime Minister concluding his references to Poland declared: "Anything like a prolonged delay in the settlement can only have the effect of increasing the division between the Poles in Poland and also of hampering the common action which the Poles, the Russians and the rest of the Allies are taking against Germany.

¹ *Sunday Times*, October 22, 1944.

² *Hansard*, October 27, 1944, Cols. 493-4.

³ *Ibid.*, Col. 494.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

Therefore, as I say, I hope that no time will be lost in continuing these discussions and pressing them to an effective conclusion."¹

It is not only of significance, but of world wide and historic import, that early in the course of this speech the British Prime Minister stated definitely to the accompaniment of loud cheers: "I am very glad to inform the house that our relations with Soviet Russia were never more close, intimate and cordial than they are at the present time."²

Differences about Poland had not adversely affected British-Soviet relations. Mr. Churchill's sentiments were re-echoed, albeit in different words from Moscow. *Izvestia* summed up the results thus: "The talks in Moscow were a splendid confirmation of the joint friendly working together of the U.S.S.R., Britain and the U.S. during the war—a good omen for the post-war period."

When Mr. Churchill gave that sound advice to the emigré Government he was undoubtedly aware that the Soviet Forces were being massed along the Vistula for a sweeping forward move to the west, that the whole of Poland would be liberated in the course of a few months and that naturally the Soviet Government could not tolerate either chaos or an unfriendly Polish administration along its lines of communication. However, M. Mikolajczyk, after a month of strenuous effort, failed to win over the majority of the emigré Government to his point of view and he resigned the Premiership on November 24, 1944. Commenting on this important event *The Times* in a leader stated:

M. Mikolajczyk has devoted all his energies to bring about a settlement which would have placed the future destinies of Poland on a firm basis of close alliance and partnership with Russia. His patriotic efforts were thwarted and finally defeated by those who failed to recognize that such a settlement was necessary and that it demanded the frank abandonment of some past mistakes and of some misguided ambitions for the future. By his resignation he has taken the decisive step of refusing to bear further responsibility for a course which can only be disastrous to those who persist in it.³

This lucid observation was in tune with the reactions of the British press in general. A few days later Professor Grabski, President of the Polish National Council, who had accompanied M. Mikolajczyk to Moscow, also resigned.

After some days of negotiations between the different parties,

¹ *Hansard*, October 27, 1944, Cols. 494-5.

² *Ibid.*, Col. 491.

³ *The Times*, November 27, 1944.

M. Arciszewski succeeded in forming a "Government," but the Peasant Party, the largest single party in the former Government, refused to associate with the new administration. Even the friendly *Observer* was moved to comment:

The position of the new Polish Government, headed by M. Arciszewski, which takes an utterly negative attitude towards Soviet demands on Poland, is precarious. Most political observers believe that it will not last long.

Its political basis is narrow, and the attitude of the other Allied Governments towards it is rather cool.¹

It was generally assumed in diplomatic circles both in London and abroad that the prospects of an accommodation between the new Polish "Government" and the Soviet Government were nil.

The *Daily Telegraph* well summed up the estimate of the British press when it referred to the new administration as "A tragic failure."

Some supporters of the new emigré Government raised the question of Soviet-Polish relations in the House of Commons in the time-honoured manner "on the motion for the adjournment" on December 15, 1944.

It was a poorly attended debate despite the fact it was known beforehand that Mr. Churchill would open it. The outstanding event of the debate was the trenchant criticism of the Polish emigré Government by Mr. Churchill and the clear and definite acceptance of the Curzon Line by the British Government. Said the Prime Minister:

The hopes which I thought it proper, and indeed necessary, to express in October, have faded. When Mr. Mikolajczyk left Moscow my hope was that he would return within a week or so with the authority of the Polish Government in London, to agree about the Polish frontiers on the basis of the Curzon Line and its prolongation southward called "the Curzon Line A," which comprises, on the Russian side, the city of Lvov. I have several times drawn Mr. Mikolajczyk's attention to the dangers of delay. Had he been able to return after the very friendly conversations which passed between him and Marshal Stalin, and also the conversations which he had with the Lublin National Liberation Committee; had he been able to return with the assent of his colleagues, I believe that the difficulties inherent in the forming of a Polish Government in harmony with the Lublin Committee, might well have been overcome. In that case he would be at this moment at the head of a Polish Government on Polish soil, recognised by all the United Nations, and awaiting the advance of the Russian Armies moving farther into Poland as the country was delivered from the Germans. He would also be assured in his task of the

¹ *Observer*, December 3, 1944.

friendship and help of Marshal Stalin. Thus he could at every stage have established a good relationship between the Polish underground movement and the advancing Russians, and a Polish Administration would have been set up by him in the newly delivered regions as they expanded.

I have the greatest respect for M. Mikolajczyk, and for his able colleagues who joined us at Moscow, Mr. Romer and Mr. Grabski. I am sure they are more qualified to fill the place of the late General Sikorsky than any other of the Polish leaders. After endless discussions, into some of which we were drawn, on Mr. Mikolajczyk's return from Moscow the Poles utterly failed to obtain agreement. In consequence, on 24th November, Mr. Mikolajczyk, Mr. Romer and a number of other Polish Ministers, resigned from the Polish Government, which has been almost entirely reconstituted in a form which in some respects I certainly am not able to applaud.¹

There is no room for doubt as to what Mr. Churchill thought and felt on this matter. Turning to the subject of the proposed new frontiers the Prime Minister stated:

I cannot accept the view that the arrangements which have to be proposed about the frontiers of the new Poland are not solid and satisfactory, or that they would not give to Poland that "abiding home" of which I spoke to the House in February. If Poland concedes Lvov and the surrounding regions in the South, on the line known as Curzon Line A, which my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary will deal with in more detail later on in the Debate—if Poland makes this concession and these lands are joined to the Ukraine, she will gain in the North the whole of East Prussia west and south of the fortress of Königsberg, including the great city and port of Danzig, one of the most magnificent cities and harbours in the whole of the world, famous for centuries as a great gathering place of the trade of the Baltic, and indeed, of the world . . . This will be hers instead of the threatened and artificial Corridor, which was built so laboriously after the last war, and Poland will stretch broadly along the Baltic on a front of over 200 miles. The Poles are free, so far as Russia and Great Britain are concerned, to extend their territory, at the expense of Germany, to the West. I do not propose to go into exact details, but the extensions, which will be supported by Britain and Russia, bound together as they are by the 20 years' Alliance, are of high importance. Thus, they gain in the West and the North territories more important and more highly developed than they lose in the East.²

Referring again to the frontier question, Mr. Churchill in most emphatic terms declared:

I must, however, say, because I am most anxious the House should understand the whole position, speaking on behalf of His Majesty's Government in a way which I believe would probably be held binding by our successors, that

¹ *Hansard*, December 15, 1944, Cols. 1480-1.

² *Ibid.*, Col. 1483.

at the Conference we shall adhere to the lines which I am now unfolding to the House, and shall not hesitate to proclaim that the Russians are justly treated, and rightly treated, in being granted the claim they make to the Eastern frontiers along the Curzon Line as described.¹

The Prime Minister's speech was warmly supported by a number of members, and vehemently attacked by others, but the critics never squarely faced up to the case advanced by Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden. The outstanding fact of the debate was that the British Government clearly and firmly pledged itself to support the claim of the Soviet Union to all territories east of the Curzon Line. Mr. Churchill's critics were furious, but their fury was matched by their helplessness.

Meanwhile the Lublin Committee was preparing to constitute itself the Provisional Government of the Polish Republic.

The "Special Correspondent" of *The Times* cabled from Lublin, December 28, 1944, that the National Council of Poland was to meet there that week-end; that the Council would demand that the Committee should be constituted the Provisional Government. The cable continued:

The demand that the committee should assume the functions of a provisional Government is generally based on the claim that in less than six months it has formed a Polish army, has built up a State administration, and has restored economic and social life in an area three times the size of Belgium and inhabited by more than 7,000,000 persons.

This is not to say that the Lublin administration commands universal support or that there are not within the committee itself strains and stresses that represent temperamental as well as political differences among its members. But it does mean that the Lublin authorities are getting increasing credit for having saved the country from the spectre of anarchy, and that on their opponents is falling the stigma of seeking to prolong the period of uncertainty.²

The Provisional Government was proclaimed on December 31st, 1944. As one would expect, the emigré Government described this decision as a "new act of lawlessness," alleging that it had no roots among the Polish people, but *The Times* correspondent in a long cable from Lublin describing the proceedings stated:

The decision that the National Liberation Committee should become "the first Provisional Government of Liberated Democratic Poland" was greeted with great enthusiasm when it was communicated to the Polish Peasant Congress

¹ *Hansard*, December 15, 1944, Col. 1488.

² *The Times*, December 29, 1944.

which was meeting at the Lublin municipal theatre. The 1,500 peasant delegates cheered the new Government and sang the Polish National Anthem. Cheers were also given for the allies and for Marshal Stalin, Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill.¹

As to the make-up of the Provisional Government, the correspondent continued: "The Provisional Government consists of five members each of the Polish Socialist Party and the Polish Peasant Party, four members of the Polish Workers' Party, two members of the Democratic Party, and one non-party member, General Rola-Zymierski. The new Cabinet was sworn in this afternoon, pledging its oath of allegiance to Poland."²

The French Government had already appointed a representative to the Lublin Committee, and shortly afterwards the Soviet and Czechoslovak Governments and later the Yugoslav Government recognized the Polish Provisional Government, but the other allied Governments continued to recognize the emigré Government.

Referring to the act of recognition by the Soviet Government, Mr. Alexander Werth, cabling from Moscow, January 6th, 1945, stated:

All the information from Poland suggests that with its numerous social and economic reforms of the past four months, its satisfactory, if partial, solution of the food problem and its control of a large Polish army holding a long stretch of the right bank of the Vistula, including Praga, opposite Warsaw, the Committee has become increasingly widely accepted as the *de facto* Government.³

Meanwhile the Soviet Forces aided by those of the Polish Provisional Government had been preparing a mighty blow and on January 17, 1945, the news was flashed around the world that they had liberated Warsaw, Cracow and Czestochowa, and immediately afterwards Warsaw was handed over to the Provisional Government. Marshal Stalin, in reply to a warm message of thanks from the latter, declared:

My heartfelt thanks for the friendly sentiments expressed by you in connection with the liberation of the capital of the Polish Republic, Warsaw.

I am certain that the joint efforts of the Red Army and the Polish Army will soon bring about the total liberation of our brother Polish nation from the yoke of the German invaders.

Long live free and independent democratic Poland.⁴

¹ *The Times*, January 1, 1945.

³ *Sunday Times*, January 7, 1945.

² *Ibid.*

⁴ *Daily Mail*, January 20, 1945.

Among the first visitors to liberated Warsaw was the able correspondent of the *News Chronicle*, Mr. Stefan Litauer. On January 24, he cabled from that famous and martyred city:

When to-day you meet among the ruins of Warsaw human beings with the appearance of skeletons and dressed in rags you know that these are Pruszkow's (distribution camp) inmates.

I talked to some of them and to some of the luckier survivors who escaped into the suburbs. Not one out of 20 had a kind word for Gen. Bor.

These simple average Warsaw citizens cursed Bor and condemned the rising. One of them, a former officer in Bor's army, said to me: "We were fooled."

When I told him of the recent decision of President Raczkiewicz and Premier Arciszewski to award Bor the highest Polish war decoration for his "victorious campaigns," he laughed heartily, thinking I meant it as a joke.

But when I insisted that it was true he looked at me in amazement and said: "Zwarjowali" (they must be crazy).¹

That did not complete the story. Five days later, Mr. A. J. Cummings wrote:

According to a broadcast by Dr. Litauer, the *News Chronicle* correspondent now in Poland, General Bor, who led the rising, was treated by the Germans after the capitulation, "with the greatest consideration."

He lived for some time (Litauer adds) in a house at Sochaczew, near Warsaw. He had at his disposal a guard of honour serving him night and day and was able to receive visitors, among them General von Bach from Berlin.

He had a luxurious car in which he drove out very often. He had Staff officers and other officers of the Polish Home Army who were housed at a villa in Milanówek, and enjoyed complete freedom of movement. They had their own mess and were supplied with food and drink by the Germans.

Later, General Bor and others were taken to Germany. "There are good reasons to believe" Litauer goes on, "that the Germans were informed beforehand of General Bor's uprising." At that interesting point his broadcast faded out.

Mr. Cummings concluded: "It is a strange story. We have certainly not yet got the full truth of the Warsaw rising, either from the Poles or from the Russians."²

The scene next shifted to the Crimea where President Roosevelt, Mr. Churchill and Marshal Stalin, together with their Service and Diplomatic advisers held their long-awaited Conference from February 4 to February 11, 1945. In the course of the official agreed report issued at the end of the Conference by the three Statesmen, they said, among many other things:

¹ *News Chronicle*, January 25, 1945.

² *Ibid.*, January 30, 1945.

We came to the Crimea Conference resolved to settle our differences about Poland. We discussed fully all aspects of the question. We reaffirm our common desire to see established a strong, free independent and democratic Poland. As a result of our discussions we have agreed on the conditions in which a new Polish Provisional Government of National Unity may be formed in such a manner as to command recognition by the three major Powers.

The agreement reached is as follows:

A new situation has been created in Poland as a result of her complete liberation by the Red Army. This calls for the establishment of a Polish Provisional Government which can be more broadly based than was possible before the recent liberation of western Poland. The Provisional Government which is now functioning in Poland should therefore be reorganized on a broader democratic basis with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland itself and from Poles abroad. This new Government should then be called the Polish Provisional Government of National Unity.

M. Molotov, Mr. Harriman and Sir A. Clark Kerr are authorized as a Commission to consult in the first instance in Moscow with members of the present Provisional Government and with other Polish democratic leaders from within Poland and from abroad, with a view to the reorganization of the present Government along the above lines. The Polish Provisional Government of National Unity shall be pledged to the holding of free and unfettered elections as soon as possible on the basis of universal suffrage and secret ballot. In these elections all democratic and anti-Nazi parties shall have the right to take part and to put forward candidates.

When a Polish Provisional Government of National Unity has been properly formed in conformity with the above, the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which now maintains diplomatic relations with the present Provisional Government of Poland, and the Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of the United States will establish diplomatic relations with the new Polish Government of National Unity, and will exchange Ambassadors by whose reports the respective Governments will be kept informed about the situation in Poland.

The three Heads of Government consider that the eastern frontier of Poland should follow the Curzon Line with digressions from it in some regions of five to eight kilometres in favour of Poland. They recognize that Poland must receive substantial accessions of territory in the North and West. They feel that the opinion of the new Polish Provisional Government of National Unity should be sought in due course on the extent of these accessions and that the final delimitation of the western frontier of Poland should thereafter await the Peace Conference.

The Polish emigré Government discussed the decisions of the Crimea Conference on February 13th and on the evening of that day they issued a statement rejecting them *in toto*.

The Report of the Crimea Conference was laid before the House of Commons as a White Paper and the Government took the unusual but wise course of allocating three days for its discussion. The Polish emigré Government and its supporters in this country strained every effort to influence the vote of the House of Commons. The Members were deluged with literature prior to the debate but all their efforts were shattered by the unquestionable facts of the case.

Mr. Churchill, in opening the Debate, February 27, 1945, made what many of his supporters as well as independent observers regarded as his greatest Parliamentary speech. He dealt of course with the Conference in full, but here we shall only deal with what he said about Soviet-Polish relations. After stressing that he had always regarded the Curzon Line as just to both sides he continued:

The Curzon Line was drawn in 1919 by an expert Commission, of which one of our most distinguished foreign representatives of those days, Sir Eyre Crowe, was a member. It was drawn at a time when Russia had few friends among the Allies. In fact, I may say that she was extremely unpopular. One cannot feel that either the circumstances or the personalities concerned would have given undue favour to Soviet Russia. They just tried to find out what was the right and proper line to draw. The British Government in those days approved this Line including, of course, the exclusion of Lvov from Poland. Apart from all that has happened since, I cannot conceive that we should not regard it as a well-informed and fair proposal.¹

Referring to Russia's earlier frontiers and to the fact that he regarded the two world wars as one story, the Prime Minister said:

The Tsarist frontiers included all Finland and the whole of the vast Warsaw salient stretching to within 60 miles of Breslau. Russia is, in fact, accepting a frontier which over immense distances is 200 or 300 miles further to the east than what was Russian territory and had been Russian territory for many generations under the Tsarist regime.²

Britain and the U.S.A. had not yielded to force in accepting this frontier—Mr. Churchill continued:

In supporting the Russian claim to the Curzon Line, I repudiate and repulse any suggestion that we are making a questionable compromise or yielding to force or fear, and I assert with the utmost conviction the broad justice of the policy upon which, for the first time, all the three great Allies have now taken their stand.³

¹ *Hansard*, February 27, 1945, Cols. 1275-6.

² *Ibid.*, Col. 1276.

³ *Ibid.*, Col. 1277.

As to Poland's future western frontiers, the speaker continued:

Moreover, the three Powers have now agreed that Poland shall receive substantial accessions of territory both in the north and in the west. In the north she will certainly receive, in the place of a precarious Corridor, the great city of Danzig, the greater part of East Prussia west and south of Koenigsberg and a long, wide sea front on the Baltic. In the west she will receive the important industrial province of Upper Silesia and, in addition, such other territories to the east of the Oder as it may be decided at the peace settlement to detach from Germany after the views of a broadly based Polish Government have been ascertained.¹

After stating that the three Great Powers represented at Yalta were all pledged to a free and democratic Poland, the Prime Minister turned to the subject of the new Government of that country:

The agreement provides for consultation, with a view to the establishment in Poland of a new Polish Provisional Government of National Unity, with which the three major Powers can all enter into diplomatic relations, instead of some recognising one Polish Government and the rest another, a situation which, if it had survived the Yalta Conference, would have proclaimed to the world disunity and confusion.²

The first steps had already been taken:

Arrangements for this are now being made in Moscow by the Commission of three, comprising M. Molotov, and Mr. Harriman and Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, representing the United States and Great Britain respectively. It will be for the Poles themselves, with such assistance as the Allies are able to give them, to agree upon the composition and constitution of the new Polish Government of National Unity.³

Towards the close of this part of his speech, Mr. Churchill in trenchant terms, made a statement which is so important that we quote it in full:

The impression I brought back from the Crimea, and from all my other contacts, is that Marshal Stalin and the Soviet leaders wish to live in honourable friendship and equality with the Western democracies. I feel also that their word is their bond, I know of no Government which stands to its obligations, even in its own despite, more solidly than the Russian Soviet Government. I decline absolutely to embark here on a discussion about Russian good faith. It is quite evident that these matters touch the whole future of the world. Sombre indeed would be the fortunes of mankind if some awful schism arose

¹ *Hansard*, February 27, 1945, Cols. 1277-8.

² *Ibid.*, Col. 1280.

³ *Ibid.*, Cols. 1280-1.

between the Western democracies and the Russian Soviet Union, if all the future world organisation were rent asunder, and if new cataclysms of inconceivable violence destroyed all that is left of the treasures and liberties of mankind.¹

When Mr. Churchill had finished there was no question as to how the vote would go.

However, on the following day, February 28th, the following amendment was moved to the motion approving the decisions of the Crimea Conference:

Remembering that Great Britain took up arms in a war of which the immediate cause was the defence of Poland against German aggression and in which the overriding motive was the prevention of the domination by a strong nation of its weaker neighbours, regrets the decision to transfer to another power the territory of an ally contrary to treaty and to Article 2 of the Atlantic Charter.²

The Debate on this issue continued throughout the day, but the critics made nothing like a serious attempt to reply to the Government's case. The mover of the amendment, Mr. Petherick, was so bereft of arguments that he actually stated that the territory in dispute between the Soviet Union and Poland "was guaranteed by treaty, freely entered into between Russia and Poland."³

It is not necessary to remind our readers that one might as well say that the Treaty which concluded the Franco-Prussian war, under which Alsace-Lorraine was ceded to Germany "was freely entered into" between France and Germany.

The supporters of the Amendment failed completely to convince the House of Commons and Mr. Eden was loudly cheered when, winding up for the Government, he stated: "As I listened to some of the speeches I could not help feeling that some of my hon. friends, in talking about Poland, had not only Poland in mind, but the fear that Russia, flushed with the magnificent triumphs of her armies, was also dreaming dreams of European domination. This, of course, is the constant theme of German propaganda. It is poured out day by day and night after night and comes to us in all sorts of unexpected forms and guises."⁴

The amendment was crushingly defeated by 396 votes to 25.

¹ *Hansard*, February 27, 1945. Cols. 1283-4.

² *Hansard*, February 28, 1945. Cols. 1421-2.

³ *Ibid.*, Col. 1427.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Col. 1514.

On the next day, March 1, 1945, the following motion was submitted to the House of Commons and carried by 413 votes to nil:

That this House approved the declaration of joint policy agreed to by the three great powers at the Crimea Conference and, in particular, welcomes their determination to maintain unity of action not only in achieving the final defeat of the common enemy but, thereafter, in peace as in war.¹

On the same day the House of Lords approved the Crimea Conference decisions unanimously.

The final result was a tremendous victory for the Government and for the policy of Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden *vis-à-vis* the Soviet Union and Poland. Addressing the Conservative Party Conference a fortnight later Mr. Churchill with justifiable pride declared:

When I became Prime Minister nearly five years ago I promised nothing but blood, toil, tears and sweat, and on that I received from the House of Commons a vote of confidence of 397 to 0 . . . The other day, after this long period of terrible events, with all their ups and downs, with all their chances and perplexities, that figure of Parliamentary confidence rose to 413 to 0.²

As to the U.S.A.—President Roosevelt in a report in person to a joint session of Congress, March 1, 1945, stated:

Throughout history Poland has been the corridor through which attacks on Russia have been made. Twice in this generation Germany has struck at Russia through this corridor. To ensure European security and world peace, a strong and independent Poland is necessary. The decision with respect to the boundaries of Poland was practically a compromise [here the President looked up and added: 'I did not agree with all of it by any means. It did not go as far as I wanted in certain areas. But all British and Russian desires were not satisfied'] under which, however, the Poles will receive compensation in territory in the north and west in exchange for what they lose by the Curzon line. The limits of the western boundary will be permanently fixed in the final peace conference. It was agreed that a large coast-line should be included. It is well-known that the people east of the Curzon line are predominantly White Russian and Ukrainian, and that the people west of the line are predominantly Polish. As far back as 1919 the representatives of the allies agreed that the Curzon line represented a fair boundary between the two peoples. I am convinced that the agreement on Poland, under the circumstances, is the most hopeful agreement possible for a free, independent, and prosperous Polish State.³

¹ *Hansard*, March 1, 1945. Col. 1672.

² *The Times*, March 16, 1945.

³ *Ibid.*, March 2, 1945.

There was no hint of hesitation in the President's report—he stated also: "One outstanding example of joint action by the three major allies in the liberated areas was the solution reached on Poland. The whole Polish question was a potential source of trouble in post-war Europe, and we came to the conference determined to find a common ground for its solution. We did."¹

Shortly after these events, the process of dissolution in the Polish emigré "Government" again manifested itself. The Diplomatic Correspondent of the *Daily Herald*, March 17, 1945, announced that: "Four of the twelve members of the Committee of the Polish Socialist Party in London have withdrawn from the Committee, because they cannot support the present Government's policies. . . . Two of the dissidents—Dr. Grosfeld and M. Stanczyk—are former Ministers."

Why had they resigned? The *Daily Herald* report continued: "The minority members strongly disapprove the appointment of General Anders as Commander-in-Chief and the attitude of the Arciszewski Cabinet towards the Crimea proposals.

"Polish Socialist circles explain that the resignations do not mean a split in the Party. They do mean that the Party as a whole can no longer be identified with M. Arciszewski's policy."

The *Sunday Times* commented: "This means that the Government now counts only on a few Socialist supporters and the Right-Wing of the National Democratic Party."²

And next day the Diplomatic Correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* added: "With the resignation of four of the eleven members of the Executive Committee of the Polish Socialist Party in London the Polish Government forgoes considerably its claim to represent Polish political life."³

The Polish National Council in London, referred to in earlier pages was dissolved by order of the "President of Poland" on March 21, 1945. The decree stated that a more politically active and representative body was needed. Shortly afterwards, Professor Grabski (former Chairman of the Council) and thirteen other members in M. Mikolajczyk's organ *Jutro Polski* bitterly attacked the Polish emigré "Government" alleging that the "Government" did not permit the Council to express its opinions freely; that nearly half the members of the Council were opposed to the undemocratic policy of the Government; that the centre of gravity had now shifted from the "emigration"

¹ *The Times*, March 2, 1945.

² *Sunday Times* March 18, 1945.

³ *Daily Telegraph* March 19, 1945.

to Poland and that the Polish political parties should accept the Crimea Conference decisions and make them a reality.

When the United Nations Conference met at San Francisco in April 1945, the London emigré "Government" protested unsuccessfully against its exclusion from the Conference; at the same time, the proposal of M. Molotov—on behalf of the Soviet Government—that the Polish Provisional Government should be invited to participate in the Conference was rejected.

Some weeks later, Mikolajczyk publicly and definitely expressed his willingness to accept the Crimea decisions. To quote his exact words: "To remove all doubt as to my attitude, I declare that I accept the Crimea decision in regard to the future of Poland, its sovereign independent position and the formation of a Provisional Government representative of national unity."¹

Next day the Polish emigré "Government" bitterly attacked M. Mikolajczyk, accusing him of being "a belated candidate for inclusion in conversations which are perhaps already in progress." Meanwhile, a witness, Stefan Litauer,² returned from Poland and portrayed for the British public in the columns of the *News Chronicle* what had happened and was now happening in liberated Poland under the Polish Provisional Government. In brief, Litauer asserted that the moral problems left behind after the German occupation were even more intractable than the physical; that a section of the Poles had collaborated with the Germans and had waxed rich in the process; that some of the others who had justifiably lived by raiding on the German had become so used to living by that method that they had little inclination for hard, honest work; that these two sections of the population were opposed to the Provisional Government; that few Red Army men were to be seen and that those who were in Poland were there to protect the lines of communication, and that their conduct was exemplary; that no attempt was being made by the Russians to communize Poland.

Summing up Poland's then greatest need, he stated:

What the people of Poland need to-day is that devoted, honest men and women should take care of them, lead them out of the wilderness and misery into which war and German occupation had thrown them, give them food and clothes, work and land, and restore normal life to the country.

This is the kind of "democracy" which the people of Poland need now, without any delay, and for which they are longing.

¹ *Daily Telegraph*, April 16, 1945.

² See p. 187.

And only when this is done and when out of the chaos the Polish people have regained their balance will the time have arrived for that other "democracy" which people treasure as the guarantee of their civic liberties.¹

Stefan Litauer emphasized that the Crimea decisions were understood and welcomed in Poland as meaning that the Provisional Government was to be enlarged, and not in the sense that a new Government was to be organized in which the Lublin Poles would constitute a minority.

As regards the popularity and stability of the Provisional Government he stated: "To an unbiased observer on the spot it is evident beyond doubt that the present Provisional Government is gaining so much popular support that it cannot be simply blown away either by internal or by external moves, unless the Kremlin decides to change its mind by 180 degrees. And for that there is no evidence at all."²

As regards those Poles—and this applied to the emigré "Government" in London despite their public, but not their private protests to the contrary—who were opposed to Polish collaboration with the U.S.S.R. Litauer declared:

"Poles who oppose Poland's alliance with Russia and deny that such a Poland could be independent pin their hopes on an armed conflict between Russia and her Allies Britain and America. They pray that such a conflict may arise, and the sooner the better.

"Their hopes must be dashed and their prayers should not be heard because they are evil."³

Meanwhile a group of sixteen Poles headed by General Okulicki had been arrested by the Soviet authorities on serious charges of illegal activities behind the lines. This fact—whilst the investigations were still in their early stages—was not disclosed by the Soviet Government but rumours were spread by the emigré Poles in London that these men had "disappeared." Questions were asked in the British Parliament but the Soviet Government refused to be flurried. At Washington, on the eve of the San Francisco Conference, the Soviet-Polish dispute was discussed by Messrs. Eden, Truman and Molotov, but without conclusive results. Finally, on May 5, 1945, at San Francisco, M. Molotov informed Messrs. Eden and Stettinius (leader of the U.S.A. Delegation) of the arrest of these sixteen Poles. On the same day the Soviet News Agency (Tass) issued the following statement:

¹ *News Chronicle*, April 9, 1945.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, April 23, 1945.

Several British newspapers have of late disseminated all sorts of rumours regarding a number of Polish political leaders who are alleged to have disappeared from Poland.

On May 2 questions about these Poles were asked in the House of Commons and 15 names were mentioned. The name of the former Polish Prime Minister, M. Witos, who is alleged to have been arrested, was also mentioned. . . .

The group of Poles mentioned in the British press and referred to in the House of Commons is composed of 16 and not of 15 people. It is headed by the well-known Polish general, Okulicki, about the disappearance of whom the British reports intentionally keep silence in view of the special odiousness of this general.

General Okulicki's group—and especially he himself—are accused of preparing diversionary acts in the rear of the Red Army, as a result of which more than 100 officers and men of the Red Army lost their lives.

This group of 16 persons did not disappear but were arrested by the military authorities of the Soviet Command, and are now in Moscow pending the investigation of the case.

This group is also accused of organising and maintaining illegal radio transmitters in the rear of the Soviet armies, which is against the law. All these men, or some of them, according to the results of the inquiry, will be tried. . . .

The report of the arrest of Witos is equally false.

The charges preferred in general by the Soviet Government were weighty and the indictment that "more than one hundred officers and men of the Red Army lost their lives" was very grave, yet instead of roundly impeaching the Poles, Messrs. Eden and Stettinius rushed to their defence. They expressed their "grave concern," asked M. Molotov "to obtain a full explanation" and broke off the conversations regarding the Soviet-Polish dispute. They pandered disastrously to the "Diehards" in Britain and the "Isolationists" in the U.S.A. by "talking rough" to the Soviet representative.

It is difficult to believe that these two statesmen had any illusions regarding the Poles in question. They cannot but have known that these gentry had been engaged in a continuous struggle against both the Soviet authorities in Poland and the Provisional Government.

M. Molotov's disclosure caused much perturbation at San Francisco, but the Commissar himself was quite unruffled. "While the rest of the San Francisco world was excited yesterday afternoon," cabled the *Daily Express* correspondent, "Molotov was peacefully inspecting the yards of Henry Kaiser, the record-breaking shipbuilder."¹

While conversations were proceeding between London, Moscow

¹ *Daily Express*, May 7, 1945.

and Washington, events did not stand still. On April 21, 1945, a Pact of Mutual Assistance for twenty years was signed between the Soviet and Provisional Polish Governments. Criticism in the British and U.S.A. press took the line that the Pact as an instrument was beyond criticism, but that it should not have been concluded until Poland had a Government recognized by the other Great Powers.

The Soviet Government did not get flurried, neither did it delay in replying to the British and U.S.A. Governments. On May 19, 1945, the following correspondence which had passed between *The Times* correspondent in Moscow and Marshal Stalin was published. The correspondent's letter, dated May 11, 1945, read:

The foreign Press has published a report that several Poles, who, according to a recent statement by Tass, were arrested and accused of carrying out diversionary acts in the rear of the Red Army, were in fact members of a delegation invited to negotiate with the Soviet authorities.

It was also stated that this group of Poles included democratic leaders whose opinion in the matter of the formation of a future Polish Government had been a valuable contribution to the task of forming such a Government.

It was stated that by the arrest of the afore-mentioned Poles the Soviet Government was undermining confidence in the measures agreed upon in the Crimea and prevented the formation of a new provisional Polish Government.

You may perhaps deem it desirable to make a statement on this question in order to clarify public opinion, which has shown an interest in this question.

And the Marshal's reply, dated May 19, 1945, read:

I am somewhat late with my reply, but this is understandable if one bears in mind how busy I am.

1. The arrest of the 16 Poles in Poland, headed by the notorious diversionist, General Okulicki, is in no way connected with the question of the reconstruction of the Polish Provisional Government. These gentlemen were arrested by virtue of a law dealing with the safeguarding of the rear of the Red Army from diversionists, analogous to the British law of the Defence of the Realm. The arrest was made by the Soviet military authorities in conformity with an agreement made between the Polish Provisional Government and the Soviet military command.

2. It is not true that the arrested Poles had been invited for the purpose of negotiations with the Soviet authorities. The Soviet authorities do not and will not conduct negotiations with breakers of the law relating to the safety of the rear of the Red Army.

3. As regards the question of the reconstruction of the Polish Provisional Government this can only be settled on the basis of the Crimea resolutions. There can be no deviation from these resolutions.

4. I am of opinion that the Polish question can be solved by agreement among the allies subject to the fulfilment of the following conditions:—

(a) That when the Polish Provisional Government is reconstituted the latter is recognized as the kernel of the future Polish Government of national unity, by analogy with Yugoslavia, where the national council of liberation was recognized as the nucleus of the united Yugoslav Government.

(b) That as a result of reconstruction, such a Government in Poland is formed as will carry out a policy of friendship with the Soviet Union and not a policy of *cordon sanitaire* directed against the Soviet Union.

(c) That the question of the reconstruction of the Polish Provisional Government is decided with Poles who have ties at the present time with the Polish people and not without their participation.¹

As usual Stalin did not shirk any issue, neither did he “spill words,” and *The Times* correspondent evidently shared the view regarding the arrested Poles then widely held by observers in Moscow. He cabled: “It would surprise few here if among the arrested men were found some who believed they were best serving Poland by opposing both Russians and Germans. This attitude is precisely what the Russians and the Poles in Warsaw are contending against; for it is viewed here as a form of the *cordon sanitaire* policy that Marshal Stalin sees as contrary to the policy of friendship he wishes the future Polish Government to pursue.”²

Shortly afterwards another foreigner visited Poland, a man whose integrity is above suspicion, e.g. the Dean of Canterbury. On his return to Moscow in an interview with the press, June 5, 1945, he stated:

Poland's recovery can be speeded up by diplomatic relations with Britain and the United States . . .

It is of immense interest to Britain and the United States to have diplomatic relations with Poland. Poland has a stable government and there is little chance that it will be upset.

The Poles are tied by interest and desire to the Soviet Union and they want the same ties with the West. This does not mean that Poland has ceased to be independent. The Soviet Union wants it to remain independent.

Polish leaders told me that they want Polish Nationals abroad to return home. They will be cordially welcomed and their services will be welcomed.

In conclusion the Dean said that he “would like to see the Polish Government enlarged according to the terms of the Yalta agreement and according to the terms outlined in Stalin's recent letter to the *London Times*.”

¹ *The Times*, May 21, 1945.

² *Ibid.*

As was well known at this period, the Polish emigré "Government" and its reactionary supporters in the U.S.A. had been very active in disseminating anti-Soviet propaganda. The American Attorney-General, Mr. Francis Biddle, in an interview with the Press at Washington, stated that the Polish Government Information Centre had spent last year (presumably 1944), £212,000, and it was generally accepted in Washington at that time that this sum was mainly spent in denouncing the Soviet Union. This amount exceeded the sums spent by the Information Bureaux of the Netherlands, Belgium and French Governments.

Following on a visit to Moscow of Mr. Harry Hopkins on behalf of President Truman an announcement was made simultaneously in the Soviet, British and American capitals on June 12, 1945, to the effect that a meeting would be held in Moscow on June 15, 1945, at which representatives of the Polish Provisional Government, as well as other Polish Democratic leaders from inside and outside Poland would be present. This announcement was hailed in the capitals of the United Nations as the breaking of the deadlock on the Polish question. Two days later Moscow stated officially that the trial of the sixteen Poles would begin in a few days.

To treat first of the latter episode. The trial opened on June 18th. The Indictment accused the defendants:

With being the organisers and leaders of the Polish underground in the rear of the Red Army on the territory of the Western Regions of Byelorussia, the Ukraine, in Lithuania and Poland;

with carrying out according to the instructions of the so-called Polish emigré "Government" in London, direct subversive work against the Red Army and the Soviet Union;

with carrying out terrorist acts against officers and men of the Red Army;
with organising diversions and attacks by underground armed detachments;
with carrying on propaganda inimical to the Soviet Union and the Red Army;
defendant Okulicki also being accused of carrying out intelligence and espionage work in the rear of the Red Army.

Of the sixteen accused: one pleaded not guilty, three pleaded guilty to some of the charges and twelve (including General Okulicki) pleaded guilty to all of the charges. One of the accused was too ill to appear in court.

The Soviet authorities as usual held the trial in public and invited the foreign press representatives in Moscow to be present; they also invited the Allied Embassies to send representatives.

The trial ended on June 21, 1945, and the sentences were:

General Okulicki, Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Home Army, ten years' captivity; Stanislaw Jankowski, Vice-Premier in Poland of the London Polish Government, eight years; Adam Bien, Vice-President of the Council of Ministers in Poland; and Stanislaw Jasiukowicz, a member of the Council, five years; Kasimierz Puzak, President of the Parliament called the Council of National Unity, 18 months; Kazimierz Baginski, Vice-President of the Council of National Unity and one of Mr. Eden's candidates for a new Polish Government, one year; Kazimierz Zwerzinski, Chairman of the Peasant Party and second Vice-President of the Council of National Unity, eight months; Evgeny Czarnowski, Democrat, six months; Stanislaw Merzs, Secretary of the Peasant Party in Cracow, Stylpukowski, member of the Peasant Party praesidium and the only prisoner to plead not guilty, Franz Urbansk, another of Mr. Eden's candidates, and Joseph Hacinski, Labour Party Chairman, four months each.

The rest (except the one who had not been tried owing to illness) were acquitted.

It is not our intention to treat at length of the trial but only to deal with a few of its features. The Procurator, after stressing the seriousness of the crimes declared:

"Nevertheless I believe it possible not to insist on the supreme penalty for the accused Okulicki, Jankowski, Bien and Jasiukowicz. I believe it possible not because now, belatedly, they repent their crimes, and not only because they acted on directives issued by the criminal emigré clique in London. I believe it possible to confine the penalty for these accused to deprivation of freedom chiefly because our country and our people now live in joyful days of the major historic victory of the Red Army and the armies of our Allies over the worst enemy of mankind—Fascist Germany.

"Now that the most righteous of all righteous wars, the war against a deadly enemy who has been thrown into the dust, has ended in victory, these people no longer represent such a danger as would require such a penalty as shooting."

The accused who pleaded guilty declared unhesitatingly that they were carrying out direct instructions of the emigré Government. To take a few instances:

"I admit," said Okulicki, "that we attempted to cause great harm to the Soviet Union, that we committed grave errors. They resulted

from our mistrust of the Soviet Union. And this mistrust was the result of propaganda which emanated from the Polish Government in London, regarded by us as our lawful Government.

"The reaction of the Soviet authorities to our activities and our presence here in the dock are quite understandable, there is enough ground for this. I wish to emphasize the kind attitude of the Soviet authorities to me as a criminal, as one in detention.

"I will accept your verdict, gentlemen Judges, calmly and with the assurance that your decision will be correct. I think that I am guilty, but I acted as a soldier."

The accused Jankowski said:

"I will call this trial a tragic trial, I will call it so because it takes place in Moscow, in the capital of the Soviet Union, in the capital of the country whose army ejected the Germans from Poland and liberated her. I will call this process tragic because it takes place in the capital of the Soviet Union where a treaty of friendship between the U.S.S.R. and Poland was recently signed.

"We felt apprehension that the Soviet Union would threaten Poland's independence. Fortunately this apprehension has proved unjustified.

"Of great importance in the abnormal relations which arose between the U.S.S.R. and Poland was the erroneous policy pursued by the Polish Government in London. It did not recognize the decisions of the Crimea Conference, and asserted that the Soviet Union menaced Poland's independence. And this brought us to an impasse."

The accused Bien said:

"It is with full confidence that I have placed my personal fate in the hands of the exalted Court. We committed grave blunders in our policy. As a lawyer I recognize that our activities were criminal.

"What was the source of our mistakes? Their source was the wrong policy of the London Polish Government which we, being in the underground, received uncritically. Mr. Procurator said here to-day that Poland has only two roads open to her: either with the Soviet Union or with the Germans. This is perfectly correct."

The Times, in the course of a leader on the trial, rightly declared:

Three of the prisoners are acquitted. Most of the rest, with General Okulicki at their head, confessed that they had engaged, as members of the underground movement and on the strength of directives received from the Polish Govern-

ment in London, in various degrees of sabotage directed against the Red Army. Nothing in these confessions will cause surprise to those who have followed with anxiety the increasingly outspoken anti-Russian activities of Polish agents here and elsewhere during the past twelve months.¹

Reporting the trial, the Moscow correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* cabled:

One of the outstanding features of the trial, now ended, of the Poles charged with underground activities in the rear of the Red Army was the manner in which General Okulicki, one of the principal accused, paid tribute to the fair way in which the prisoners had been treated by the court.

Before he was sentenced General Okulicki, who is obviously neither a fool nor a flatterer, underlined his realisation that the greatest of his mistakes was his fixed distrust of Russia.

"People who sat through the whole of the trial," continued the correspondent, "feel, I believe, that justice has been tempered liberally with mercy."²

In passing we would add that the evidence brought out in this trial shows how unjustified and precipitate, not to use much stronger expressions, was Mr. Eden's decision (May 5, 1945) to cut short the negotiations for the reorganization of the Polish Provisional Government which were then proceeding because of the arrest of the sixteen Poles in question.

Now to return to the Polish negotiations in Moscow. They were not disturbed by the trial, in fact they were aided by it because of the exposure of the emigré "Government." There was some delay about the opening of the conversations because of the late arrival of some of the Delegates, but once started they worked with a will. The Poles very wisely decided that the question of settling their differences was one which they themselves should solve without the aid of outside arbitrators and they did solve them. The following official statement was issued in the early hours of June 23, 1945:

As has already been announced, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R., V. M. Molotov, the British Ambassador, Sir Archibald Clark-Kerr, and the Ambassador of the United States of America, Mr. Averell Harriman, were empowered by the Crimea Conference of the three Allied Powers to consult with Members of the Provisional Polish Government and with other democratic leaders from within Poland and abroad concerning the reorganisation of the Provisional Polish Government on a broader, democratic basis, with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland itself and of Poles

¹ June 22, 1945.

² Ibid., June 22, 1945.

from abroad, and concerning the formation of a Provisional Polish Government of National Unity.

Between June 17 and 21 a series of meetings has taken place between members of the Provisional Polish Government and with other democratic leaders from within Poland and abroad concerning the reorganization of the Provisional Polish Government on a broader, democratic basis, with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland itself and of Poles from abroad, and concerning the formation of a Provisional Polish Government of National Unity.

As a result of these meetings between members of the Provisional Polish Government and the above-mentioned democratic leaders, complete agreement has been reached on the formation of a Polish Provisional Government of National Unity on the basis indicated above.

The text of this Agreement, which has been submitted to the Commission on the Polish question, reads as follows:

Representatives of the Provisional Government of the Polish Republic: President Mr. Boleslaw Bierut, Vice-President Mr. Wladyslaw Kowalski, Premier Mr. Edward Osobka-Morawski and Vice-Premier Mr. Wladyslaw Gomolka; democratic leaders from Poland: Dr. Wladyslaw Kiernik (who arrived in place of Mr. Wincenty Witos, who is indisposed), Dr. Henryk Kolodzielski, Professor Dr. Adam Krzyzanowski, Professor Stanislaw Kutrzeba and Mr. Zygmunt Zulawski; Polish democratic leaders from abroad; Mr. Stanislaw Mikolajczyk, Mr. Anton Kolodziej (who arrived in place of Engineer Juliusz Zakowski) as well as Mr. Jan Stanczyk—arrived in Moscow at the invitation of the Commission set up on the basis of the Crimea decisions and consisting of Mr. V. M. Molotov, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R., Sir Archibald Clark-Kerr, Ambassador of Great Britain, and Mr. Averell Harriman, Ambassador of the United States of America.

The above-mentioned representatives of the Provisional Government of the Polish Republic, as well as Democratic leaders from Poland and from abroad, convinced that the feeling of national dignity and sovereignty of the Polish State require that Polish affairs be settled by the Poles themselves, reached full understanding as regards the reorganization of the Provisional Government of the Polish Republic.

This understanding is expressed in the following decisions unanimously adopted: (a) Invitations to Mr. Wincenty Witos from Poland and Mr. Stanislaw Grabski from abroad to join the Presidium of the National Council of Poland. (b) Inclusion of Messrs. W. Kiernik and Czeslaw Wycch from Poland as well as Messrs. Stanislaw Mikolajczyk, J. Stanczyk and Mieczyslaw Thugut from abroad in the Government of National Unity. (c) Full composition of the Government of National Unity will be published in Warsaw within the next few days.

Simultaneously it was decided to invite to participate in State activities a number of Polish democratic leaders hitherto resident abroad, among them Mr. Popiel, Chairman of the Stronnictwo Pracy (Party of Labour) as well as Messrs. Kolodziej and Zakowski.

President Mr. Bierut undertook to notify the Commission, consisting of Mr. Molotov, Sir Archibald Clark-Kerr and Mr. Harriman, of the above decisions.

"Mr. Molotov, Mr. Harriman and Sir Archibald Clark-Kerr, acting on the authorization of the Crimea Conference as the Commission on the Polish question have noted with satisfaction the Agreement reached between the Provisional Polish Government and the other democratic leaders from Poland and abroad on the formation of a Provisional Polish Government of National Unity."

When this dramatic news was flashed round the world it was received with tremendous satisfaction in the capitals of the United Nations, the only exception being the emigré "Government" together with its followers and also the dyed-in-the-wool "Dichards" and the American Isolationists. There was universal satisfaction that the Poles had settled their differences and universal relief that this disturbing element in the relations between Great Britain, the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. had been removed.

When the members of the "Polish Provisional Government of National Unity" arrived in Warsaw a few days later they were given a tumultuous welcome and its spokesmen in all their public declarations of foreign policy emphasized the imperative necessity for the closest collaboration in all spheres between the Polish Republic and its great neighbour, the U.S.S.R.

The British and U.S.A. Governments, on July 5, 1945, simultaneously issued declarations recognizing the "Polish Provisional Government of National Unity" and withdrew recognition from what they now designated the "London Polish Government." Ministers were mutually appointed to Warsaw, London and Washington and the affairs of the "London Polish Government" were ultimately wound up.

As to the final delimitation of the Soviet-Polish frontier—a Treaty was signed in Moscow on August 16, 1945, between representatives of both Governments on that question. The new frontier followed in the main the "Curzon Line," but there were two deviations in Poland's favour. To quote the official text of the instrument:

(a) Territory situated to the East of the "Curzon Line" up to the river Zapadny¹ Bug and the river Solokia south of the town of Krylow with a deviation in Poland's favour up to 30 kilometres at the maximum;

(b) Part of the territory of the Bjalowiez Forest in the sector Niemirow-Jalowka situated to the East of the "Curzon Line," including Niemirow,

¹ Western.

Gainowka, Bjalowiez and Jalowka, with a deviation in Poland's favour up to 17 kilometres at the maximum.

(See Map No. V.)

Commenting on frontier delimitation, *Izvestia* stated:

"The Soviet Union went further than the Crimea decisions, and magnanimously conceded to Poland additional territory east of the Curzon Line in the area of the Rivers Zapadny Bug and Solokia, and part of the Bjalowiez Forest in the sector of Niemirow and Jalowka. In these areas the deviation from the Curzon Line, determined by the Crimea decision at five to eight kilometres, reached thirty and seventeen kilometres respectively in Poland's favour."

The commentator Viktorov in a broadcast from Moscow declared:

There is no more Polish question. Establishment of the State frontier between the Soviet Union and Poland is a vivid proof of the radical change which has taken place in Polish-Soviet relations. On the ruins of the Poland of the "Pans" there has arisen a new, democratic, strong and independent Poland, whose borders are established in accordance with historic justice and the national interests of the Polish people.

The new Poland has the industrial and agricultural basis for successful development of its economy.

The representatives of the new Poland were well satisfied with the frontier line and looked forward to a new era in Russian-Polish relations.

M. Osubka-Morawski, Prime Minister of the Polish Provisional Government, in an interview with "Tass" stated:

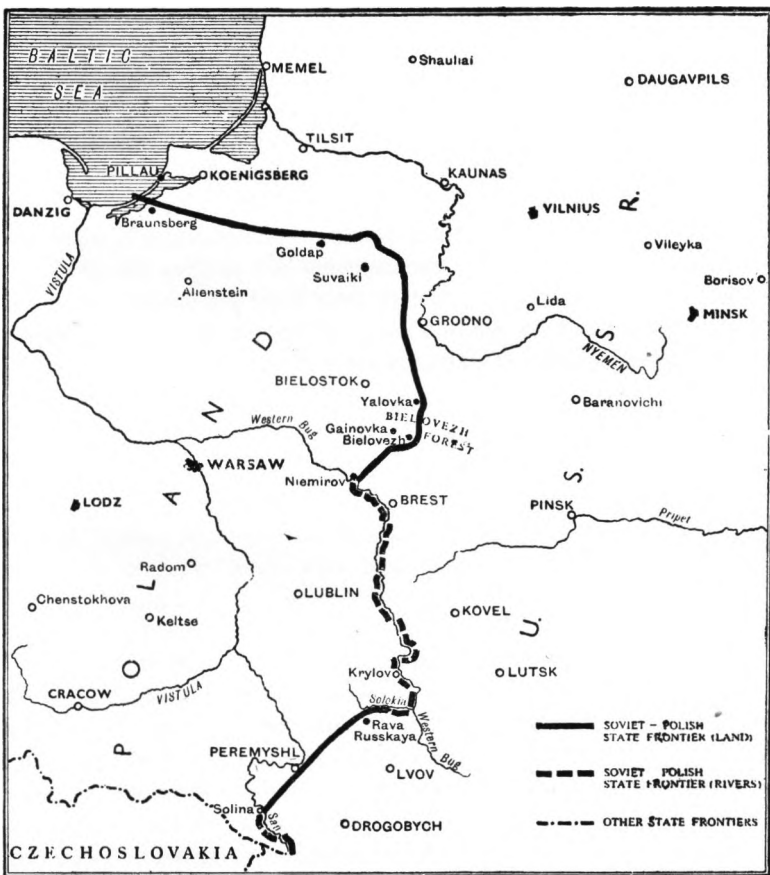
"The Treaty on the Polish-Soviet frontier which has just been signed is of tremendous historical importance for our peoples, because it not only settles radically the question of the frontier which for centuries blazed with hatred and struggle, but also lays a strong foundation of friendship and fraternal, good-neighbourly co-existence of our peoples."

The speaker recognized frankly the tragic consequences of Polish Imperialism in the past. He stated:

"Jagellon Poland, situated on the forward line of the German eastward drive, proved unable to check this drive by her own forces and chose the wrong path of seeking compensation in the East, instead of organizing an effective joint rebuff to German aggression by all the Slav peoples in the spirit of Gruenwald. This grave political error has caused much harm to the Slav peoples, and in the first place cruelly punished Poland herself.

SOVIET-POLISH FRONTIER BY AGREEMENT OF AUGUST 1945

(See p. 214)



"Not only did Poland lose her former position of a powerful European State and her richest territories in the West, the cradle of the Polish State, but millions of Poles living in these territories were thrown into German slavery and doomed to extermination and denationalization. And Poland soon also lost her national independence."

Looking to the promising future in harmony with the Eastern Slavs and Lithuanians, M. Osubka-Morawski added:

"The belief that the greatness and might of a State is independent of the desires of its multinational population, who may have no conditions for normal national development, yielded a deplorable result in the case of Poland before September 1939. The Polish people, who have suffered so much as a result of the loss of independence and who value this independence above all things, have never opposed and could not oppose the independence of the Ukrainians, Byelorussians or Lithuanians. And now that the establishment of our new frontier has brought about the final reunion of these peoples, the Polish people whole-heartedly wishes them the full blessings of freedom and national independence."

What of the future of Soviet-Polish relations? In our opinion and judging by every canon of natural justice they are more propitious now than at any time during the past six centuries, i.e. since Poland invaded Russian territory and annexed Galicia in the middle of the fourteenth century. Since that fatal historic episode the relations between Poland and the Eastern Slavs have never been cordial. Every Peace Treaty has been an unstable truce.

A great state like Russia could not be expected to acquiesce in the permanent seizure and occupation of Russian territory by Poland, and Poland's natural and just claim of independence within her ethnographical frontiers is equally reasonable.

The injustices and stupidities of the Treaty of Riga have now been corrected and the desire to see Poland strong and independent is fully appreciated and warmly welcomed in the U.S.S.R. A long and tragic history harmful to both countries has been closed. We can only hope that when the epilogue is written it will be a chapter of happy and fruitful co-operation between these two Slav peoples. Already this chapter has begun well and at the time of the publication of this book relations between these two Slav peoples are better than they have ever been during the last six centuries.

APPENDIX I

ON THE POLISH ARMY UNITS WHICH WERE FORMED IN THE U.S.S.R.

Following the conclusion of the Polish-Soviet Agreement on July 30, 1941, the formation of a Polish Army was begun on the territory of the Soviet Union in accordance with the military agreement concluded by the Soviet and Polish Commands on August 14 of the same year.

At the same time, by agreement between the Soviet and Polish Commands, the total strength of the Polish Army was fixed at 30,000 men, while in conformity with the suggestion of General Anders, it was also found expedient that as soon as one or another division was ready it should be dispatched immediately to the Soviet-German front.

The Soviet military authorities, which on the instruction of the Soviet Government assisted the Polish Command by every means to achieve the speediest settlement of all problems connected with the accelerated formation of the Polish units, established full equality of supplies for the Polish Army and for Red Army units in process of formation.

To finance measures connected with the formation and maintenance of the Polish Army, the Soviet Government granted to the Polish Government a loan without interest amounting to 65,000,000 roubles, which later, after January 1, 1942, was raised to 300,000,000 roubles. In addition to these sums allotted by the Soviet Government, more than 15,000,000 roubles were distributed in unrepayable allowances to officers of Polish Army units in process of formation.

It should be noted that, although the strength of the Polish Army had been fixed originally at 30,000 men, on October 25, 1941, the Polish Army already numbered 41,561 men, including 2,630 officers. The Soviet Government received favourably the proposal of the Polish Government, made in December, 1941, by General Sikorsky for the further expansion of the contingent of the Polish Army to 96,000 men. As a consequence of this decision, a Polish Army was formed consisting of six divisions, and in addition it was decided to raise to 40,000 the effectives of the officers' school reserve units and army reinforcements units originally fixed at 3,000 men.

In conformity with the desire of the Polish Government, the whole army was transferred to southern districts of the U.S.S.R., a decision dictated chiefly by climatic conditions, and there the construction of camps was commenced and H.Q., military schools and medical institutions, etc., were quartered.

Despite difficult war-time conditions, in February 1942 the planned divisions had already been formed and numbered 73,415 men. Despite the repeated assurances of the Polish Command, however, concerning their determination to put their units into action as soon as possible, the actual date of dispatch of these units to the front kept on being postponed.

When the formation of the Polish Army began, the time limit for its readiness was fixed at October 1, 1941. Moreover, the Polish Command stated that it believed it expedient to dispatch the divisions to the front separately, as their formation was completed.

Although the preparation of some units was delayed, nevertheless there existed ample opportunity to act on this intention, if not on October 1, then somewhat later. It was not fulfilled, however, and the Polish Command never even raised the question of the dispatch of the Polish divisions to the Soviet-German front.

The Soviet Government did not think it possible to press the Polish Command in this matter. However, five months after the commencement of the formation of the Polish units, namely in February 1942, the Soviet Government considered that the Polish units could start fighting the Hitlerites, and mentioned the 5th Division as one which had already completed its training. When posing this question the Soviet Government proceeded in the first place from the direct and clear provisions of the Soviet-Polish military agreement of August 14, 1941, the seventh article of which stated:

"The Polish Army units will be moved to the front on the achievement of all fighting readiness. They will march out as a rule in formations not smaller than a division and will be used in conformity with the plan of operations of the Supreme Command of the U.S.S.R."

In spite of the categorical provisions of the Soviet-Polish military agreement General Anders, on behalf of the Polish Government, subsequently stated that he thought it undesirable to send the divisions into action separately, although on other fronts Poles were fighting even in brigades. General Anders gave a promise that the whole Polish Army would be ready to take part in war operations against the Germans by June 1, 1942.

Neither on June 1 nor considerably later did the Polish Command and the Polish Government show readiness to send the Polish Army to take part in operations on the Soviet-German front. Moreover, the Polish Government even formally refused to dispatch its troops to the Soviet-German front, stating as the motive that "The use of separate divisions will not yield any result," and that "the military training of one division will not justify our expectations." (Telegram of General Sikorsky dated February 7, 1942.)

Meanwhile, deliveries of provisions to the U.S.S.R. fell short of the plan in view of the outbreak of war in the Pacific, and this imposed the necessity of reducing the number of rations issued to army units not engaged in actual fighting, for the sake of assuring supplies for troops in the field.

Inasmuch as the Polish Command displayed no desire to dispatch any of the Polish units to the Soviet-German front and continued to keep them far in the rear, the Soviet Government was naturally compelled to regard these units as troops not engaged in actual fighting, and consequently the decision on the reduction of food rations for units not engaged in fighting was extended to them.

In view of this, the Soviet Government adopted the decision, as from April 1, 1942, to reduce the number of food rations to 44,000 and permit, in conformity with the desire expressed by the Polish Government, the evacuation to Iran of Polish troops in excess of 44,000 remaining in the Soviet Union.

This evacuation was effected in March 1942, when 31,488 men in military service left the U.S.S.R.; 12,455 members of families of Polish soldiers were permitted to leave together with them.

While refusing to dispatch its army to the Soviet-German front, the Polish Government at the same time pressed the Soviet Government for consent to additional recruitment to the Polish Army on the territory of the U.S.S.R. Simultaneously with its proposal on additional enrolment, the Polish Government addressed a note to the Soviet Government proposing such employment of Polish Army units as meant nothing but refusal to use them on the Soviet-German front.

In reply to this note (June 10, 1942) the Soviet Government informed the Polish Government that as, contrary to the agreement between the U.S.S.R. and Poland, the Polish Government did not find it possible to use Polish units formed in the U.S.S.R. on the Soviet-German front, the Soviet Government could not permit the further formation of Polish units in the U.S.S.R.

Then the question was raised of the evacuation of the whole Polish Army from the U.S.S.R. to the Near East, and 44,000 Polish military were additionally evacuated in August 1942. Thus the question of the participation of Polish troops, in common with Soviet troops, in the struggle against Hitlerite Germany was removed from the Order of the Day by the Polish Government. The Polish Government decided this question in the negative contrary to its original assurances, contrary to the solemn statements made in the declaration of December 4, 1941, to the effect that "Troops of the Polish Republic stationed on the territory of the Soviet Union will fight the German brigands shoulder-to-shoulder with Soviet troops."

Prior to the second evacuation, the Polish Army Command requested permission for 20,000 to 25,000 members of the families of Polish soldiers to leave together with Polish army units. The Soviet Government granted this request. In fact, by September 1, 1942, 25,301 members of families of Polish military had already been evacuated. Thus, altogether in 1942 there left the U.S.S.R., besides 75,491 Polish military, 37,756 members of their families.

Recently Monsieur Romer, the Polish Ambassador, raised the question of the additional departure from the U.S.S.R. of 110 members of families of Polish military who failed to arrive at the evacuation centres at the moment of evacuation. The Soviet Government agreed. No other proposals for the evacuation of families of Polish military were made to the Soviet Government by the Polish Army Command or the Polish Embassy. All allegations that the Soviet authorities hindered or hinder the departure from the U.S.S.R. of Polish subjects, whose number in fact is not great, and also of the families of Polish military who left the Soviet Union, are false.

All the above proves that the Soviet Government took every measure to ensure the successful formation and expansion of the Polish Army on the territory of the Soviet Union.

The regulations of the agreement of July 30, 1941, and of the declaration dated December 4, 1941, faced the Soviet Government and the Polish Government with a quite definite and clear-cut task: to unite the efforts of the Soviet and Polish peoples in joint struggle against the Hitlerite brigands and occupationists, to create a Polish Army inspired by this great idea and to enable it to fight for the independence of its motherland shoulder to shoulder with the Red Army.

The Soviet Government did all that was necessary to accomplish this task. The Polish Government adopted a different path. It did not dispatch its divisions to the Soviet-German front. It refused to use Polish troops against the Germans on this front shoulder to shoulder with Soviet troops, and thus evaded the fulfilment of the obligations it had assumed.

In connection with the question of the formation of the Polish Army on the territory of the Soviet Union, it is necessary to mention the following: after the union, by the will of the Ukrainian and Byelorussian peoples, of the western regions of the Ukraine and Byelorussia with the Ukrainian Soviet Republic and the Byelorussian Soviet Republic on November 19, 1939, a decree was issued by the Supreme Soviet by force of which, in accordance with the general union legislation regarding citizenship, the residents of these regions acquired Soviet citizenship.

As I have already pointed out, after the restoration of relations between the Soviet Government and the Polish Government and the conclusion of the Soviet-Polish military agreement of August 14, 1941, the Soviet Government carried out a number of measures to ensure the formation of a Polish Army on the territory of the U.S.S.R. In order to facilitate the formation of this army and ensure cadres for it, the Soviet Government expressed its readiness, by exception from the decree of November 29, 1939, to consider persons of Polish nationality among the residents of the western Ukraine and western Byelorussia to be Polish subjects. Despite this manifestation of goodwill and pliancy on the part of the Soviet Government, the Polish Government adopted a negative attitude towards this act of the Soviet Government and was not satisfied with it, being guided by its unlawful claims to territories of western Ukraine and western Byelorussia.

Meanwhile, as I have already stated, the Polish Government withdrew its army units from the U.S.S.R. as far back as August 1942, and thus the necessity for further formation of Polish Army units on Soviet territory lapsed. In view of the above-mentioned circumstances, there lapsed the need for excepting persons of Polish nationality concerning which the Soviet Government had expressed its readiness in December 1941.

Therefore, on January 16, 1943, the Soviet Government informed the Polish Government that its previous statement of readiness to permit the exception

from the decree of November 29, 1939, of the above-mentioned persons of Polish nationality should be considered as no longer valid and the possibility of their exemption from the provision of Soviet laws on citizenship as no longer existing.

Such are the facts shedding full light on the circumstances of the formation of the Polish Army units on the territory of the U.S.S.R. and the evacuation of those units from the Soviet Union.

APPENDIX II

ON MEASURES FOR RELIEF TO POLISH FAMILIES EVACUATED FROM DISTRICTS OCCUPIED BY THE GERMAN INVADERS

Since the very moment of the restoration of Soviet-Polish relations, in the summer of 1941, the Soviet Government willingly met the wishes of the Polish Government in the matter of organising relief to Polish citizens on the territory of the U.S.S.R. In this connection the Soviet Government permitted the opening of representations of the Polish Embassy in many towns of the Soviet Union. Such representations were opened in twenty places of the Soviet Union.

The local representatives of the Embassy were charged with rendering material aid to Polish citizens. This aid was rendered in the first place from the loan, amounting to 100,000,000 roubles, granted by the Soviet Government for this purpose, in addition to the loan of 300,000,000 roubles I have already mentioned.¹ This aid was rendered at the expense of the funds of the Polish Embassy and donations put at the disposal of the Embassy from abroad.

The Soviet Government found it possible, along with the organisation of special representations of the Embassy in 20 places in the Soviet Union, to permit also the appointment by the Embassy of so-called delegates. By January 1, 1943, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs gave consent to the appointment of 421 delegates of the Polish Embassy, to whom the local authorities rendered every assistance in their work.

Thus the Polish Embassy was enabled to organise a wide network of its representatives throughout the territory of the Soviet Union, through whose medium it could render regular aid to needy Polish citizens and exercise its influence in the spirit of Soviet-Polish collaboration, using for this purpose also such channels as the newspaper "Polska," published by the Polish Embassy, with the assistance of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. The representatives of the Embassy, as well as the delegates, were accorded by the Soviet authorities every opportunity for the most successful solution of the tasks before them.

¹ See p. 216.

For the same purpose of assistance to Polish citizens, the Soviet Government also adopted a number of large-scale financial and economic measures directed towards increasing material assistance to needy Polish citizens. The Soviet Government set aside special stocks of provisions for Polish charitable institutions and allowed a reduced railway tariff for freight destined for Polish citizens.

With the full assistance of the Soviet authorities, the Embassy organised 589 charitable institutions (dining-rooms, children's homes, creches, homes for invalids, etc.). Thus the Soviet Government took all measures to satisfy the needs of the Polish population, and for the widespread and fruitful development of the activities of Polish institutions which had as their task the rendering of material aid to the Polish population. The local Soviet organs—executive committees of Soviets—on whom fell the main care of settling Polish citizens, supplying them with food, housing, fuel, medical aid, finding them employment, etc., likewise did everything possible to facilitate the development of the activities of the local Polish representations and gave these representations wide help. This entailed quite a few difficulties, in view of the exceptionally complicated war-time conditions.

The Polish representatives were thus afforded the widest possibilities for fruitful work in rendering material assistance to needy Polish citizens. In reality however, it transpired that the Polish representations in the localities, and a number of their staff members and delegates, instead of honestly performing their duty and their obligations in collaboration with the local Soviet authorities chose the path of espionage activities hostile to the U.S.S.R.

The persons guilty of these offences were arraigned for trial, which established that local representatives of the Embassy had conducted their espionage under cover of alleged "charitable" activities, widely using Polish citizens who needed material aid, and that the principal organiser of these criminal activities hostile to the Soviet Union on the part of a number of Polish citizens were some members of the diplomatic staff of the Embassy, who encouraged, organised and directed these criminal activities.

General Wolikowski, the former chief of the Polish Military Mission, who played one of the most important parts in the promotion and realisation of espionage in the U.S.S.R., the First Secretaries of the Embassy, Arlet and Zalenski (the latter being also representative of the Embassy for Vladivostok), the Second Secretaries, Gruyar (representative for the Archangel region) and Glogovski, the attachés of the Embassy, Rolya-Janicki, Slovikovsky, Plosski, Litzkendorf, Koscyalkovski, Heiteman and others, the majority of whom simultaneously acted as representatives of the Embassy in various territories and regions, were exposed and deported from the U.S.S.R.

In addition to the above persons, other representatives of the Embassy and staff members of representations participated in criminal activities against the U.S.S.R. and were prosecuted under criminal law. Some of them were deported from the Soviet Union, while others were arraigned for trial and sentenced to various terms of deprivation of freedom.

It should be said that the overwhelming majority of the representatives and staff members of the Polish Embassy prosecuted under criminal law, in addition to espionage activities, engaged in systematic circulation of all kinds of slanderous rumours and fabrications hostile to the Soviet Union, intended to discredit the Soviet order and aimed at provoking discontent and hostility of Polish citizens against the Soviet people. Numerous instances of extolling the Hitlerites by the said Polish representatives, of malignant escapades by them against the Red Army and of the circulation of defeatist provocational rumours, were proved to have taken place. In court the overwhelming majority of these persons, as well as others brought to criminal responsibility, pleaded guilty to criminal activities and gave detailed evidence elucidating the essence and methods of these activities.

It is also necessary to mention the "instructions concerning courier mail" issued by the Embassy, which contained practical directives to couriers on the performance of their illegal function, on the use of a special code, agreed code words, agreed passwords, etc.

How discriminating certain representatives of the Embassy were in the means and methods of their criminal activities may be seen from the following document, which is an official letter signed by the Attaché of the Embassy, Povezh, dated February 19, 1942, addressed to the delegate Benock in Alma-Ata. This letter stated: "In addition to our previous conversations, I beg to inform you of the decision of the Embassy of the Polish Republic concerning your delegation: 1. You are empowered to conduct in the most cautious and secret manner the purchase of valuables. . . ."

On May 31, 1942, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs warned the Polish Embassy concerning facts of espionage work hostile to the U.S.S.R. on the part of some representatives of the Embassy. Despite this warning, espionage and other activities hostile to the Soviet Union by staff members of the Polish Embassy were not discontinued.

Then on July 20, 1942, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs informed the Embassy that the Polish representations were to be liquidated as they did not justify their existence.

Such are the facts relating to the question of assistance to Polish families evacuated from areas occupied by the German invaders, and illustrating the activities of some Polish representatives in the U.S.S.R. hostile to the Soviet Union.

The facts I have already cited are the reply to the recent numerous false utterances, hostile to the Soviet Union, on the part of the Polish representatives and the Polish official press. The false nature and anti-Soviet hostility of such utterances cannot serve as an obstacle to really friendly and close Soviet-Polish relations, in which the peoples of the Soviet Union and Poland are interested, especially in the face of the common enemy—Hitlerite Germany.

These appendixes form the text of a statement made by M. Vyshinsky, Assistant People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R., on May 6, 1943.

DECLARATION of the Supreme Council of the Allied and Associated Powers relative to the Provisional Eastern Frontiers of Poland.—Paris, December 8, 1919.

Les principales Puissances alliées et associées, ayant reconnu qu'il importe de faire cesser le plus tôt possible l'état actuel d'incertitude politique dans laquelle se trouve la nation polonaise, et sans préjuger des stipulations ultérieures devant fixer les frontières orientales définitives de la Pologne, déclarent reconnaître dès à présent les droits du Gouvernement polonais de procéder, dans les termes précédemment prévus par le Traité du 28 juin 1919 avec la Pologne, à l'organisation d'une administration régulière des territoires de l'ancien Empire de Russie situés à l'ouest de la ligne ci-dessous décrite:

Du point où l'ancienne frontière entre la Russie et l'Autriche-Hongrie rencontre la rivière Bug, et jusqu'au point où elle est coupée par la limite administrative entre les cercles de Byelsk et de Brest-Litovsk:

le cours de la Bug vers l'aval;

de là, vers le nord, cette limite administrative jusqu'au point où elle forme un angle aigu à environ 9 kilom. au nord-est de Melnik;

de là, vers le nord-est, jusqu'à un point du cours de la Lesna Prawa où le cours d'eau est coupé par la route forestière en direction sud-nord, passant à environ 2 kilom. à l'ouest de Sku-powo:

une ligne à déterminer sur le terrain, laissant à la Pologne les villages de Weirpole, Stolbce, Piesczatka et Wolka, et coupant la voie ferrée Byelsk à Brest-Litovsk au point où elle franchit la route de Vysoko-Litovsk à Kleshcheli;

de là, vers le nord, jusqu'au point où la route Narev-Narevka coupe la voie ferrée Gainowka-Svisloch:

une ligne à déterminer sur le terrain et le long de la route forestière désignée ci-dessus;

de là, vers le nord-est, jusqu'au point situé à 4 kilom. au nord de Yalowka où la rivière Svisloch est rejointe par celle qui-traverse cette ville:

une ligne à déterminer sur le terrain;

de là, en aval le cours du Svisloch, puis en amont celui de Laszanka; puis en amont celui du Likowka jusqu'à 1½ kilom. à l'ouest de Baranowo;

de là, vers le nord-nord-ouest, jusqu'à un point de la voie ferrée Grodna-Kuznitsa, situé à environ 500 mètres au nord-est de la bifurcation de Kielbasin:

une ligne à déterminer sur le terrain;

de là, vers le nord-ouest, jusqu'à un point situé sur le cours du Lososna, à environ 2½ kilom. au sud-ouest de son confluent avec le Nyeman:

une ligne à déterminer sur le terrain;

de là, le cours du Lososna en aval, puis celui du Nyeman en aval, puis en amont, jusqu'à sa source, celui de la rivière Igorka, qui traverse Warwischki;

de là, vers l'ouest-sud-ouest, jusqu'à un point du cours du Chernohanja

(Marycha) près de Sztudjanka:

une ligne à déterminer sur le terrain, suivant un affluent de la rive gauche; de là, en amont le cours du Chernohanja jusqu'à un point à environ 2.5 kilom. à l'est de Zelwa;

de là, vers le nord jusqu'à un point de la route Berzniki-Kopciowa situé à environ 2 kilom. au sud-est de Berzniki:

une ligne à déterminer sur le terrain;

de là, vers le nord-ouest jusqu'au point le plus au sud du rentrant de la limite administrative septentrionale du district de Suwalki (à environ 7 kilom. au nord-ouest de Pusk):

une ligne à déterminer sur le terrain, en direction générale parallèle à la ligne de petits lacs situés entre Berzniki et Zegary et à environ 2 kilom. à l'est de ces lacs, se dirigeant vers l'ouest jusqu'à un point situé sur le lac Galadusya à environ 2 kilom. au nord de Zegary, franchissant le lac jusqu'à son extrémité nord-ouest et laissant Pusk à la Pologne;

de là, vers le nord la limite administrative de Suwalki jusqu'au point où elle rencontre l'ancienne frontière entre la Russie et la Prusse orientale.

Les droits que la Pologne pourrait avoir à faire valoir sur les territoires situés à l'est de ladite ligne sont expressément réservés.

Fait à Paris, le 8 décembre, 1919.

*Le Président du Conseil suprême
des Puissances alliées et associées,*

G. CLEMENCEAU.

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WHY RUSSIA WILL WIN

In Preparation:

THE ASIATIC REPUBLICS OF THE U.S.S.R.

*Excerpt from a letter received by Mr. Coates from Sir Robert Hodgson,
K.C.M.G., K.B.E., Head of the British Mission in Moscow, 1921 to 1924,
and Charge d'Affaires till 1927 on the occasion of the publication of*
A HISTORY OF ANGLO-SOVIET RELATIONS

"I have just been reading the book which you and Mrs. Coates have written on Anglo-Russian relations. The purpose of this letter is to tell you what I think about it.

To my mind it is a most valuable work—of the very kind we need at a moment like the present when there is immense enthusiasm for the Soviet Union in some quarters, distrust of it and dislike in others. What is required is a factual, concise and absolutely objective study and that is what you have produced. Also you have shown marked ability in doing so without at any time making it tiresome or tedious. As you know, I have been in Russia many years—before the Revolution, during it and afterwards, so I can claim to have some knowledge of the Russian character and way of thinking. I am convinced that, had we handled our interminable disputes with Russia more generously and understandingly—not, for instance, been so terrified at the prospect of her having a 'warm-water port'—most of the squabbling and backbiting which have marred our relations ever since the days of Catherine the Great, might have been avoided.

Nowadays it is more essential than ever that Britain and Russia find the way to collaboration, for Anglo-Russian disharmony promises to give us a sorry Europe. We look at political and other matters from different angles and always shall do so. Conflicts then from time to time are inevitable, but with goodwill on both sides and the mutual desire to find a way out of them, there is no reason whatever why such differences of opinion should lead to grave results. Your book to my mind is just what is needed to provide a background such as will assist in the elimination of potential causes of trouble. I congratulate you on it."
